

SAINT TERESA OF AVILA

COLLECTED WORKS



THE BOOK OF HER LIFE SPIRITUAL TESTIMONIES SOLILOQUIES



Translated by

KIERAN KAVANAUGH, O.C.D. OTILIO RODRIGUEZ, O.C.D.

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF SAINT TERESA OF AVILA

This is the Second Edition of Volume One of **THE COLLECTED WORKS OF ST. TERESA OF AVILA**, first woman doctor of the Church. The translators have taken full advantage of all that recent scholarship has contributed to a better understanding of Teresa and her writings. It includes her first major work, the *Life*, and two of her smaller works, the *Spiritual Testimonies* and the *Soliloquies*. Clear and contemporary, this rendering captures much of Teresa's spirit while remaining faithful to her thought.

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*The Collected Works
of
St. Teresa of Avila*

VOLUME ONE

*The Collected Works
of
St. Teresa of Avila*

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*The Book of Her Life
Spiritual Testimonies
Soliloquies*

Translated by
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*The Book
of Her Life*

THE BOOK OF HER LIFE

INTRODUCTION

Early Years

Spain, separated from the continent of Europe by the Pyrenees, has a high central tableland both dividing the country within itself and stretching from the northern mountains to the southern coast. Without a natural center and without easy routes, this land was in the Middle Ages a disparate region, a complex of different races, languages, and civilizations. But at the end of the fifteenth century and the opening years of the sixteenth, all the natural disadvantages were somehow overcome. Spain, with ten per cent of its soil bare rock and only ten per cent of it rich, became in the sixteenth century the greatest power on earth; this previously remote peninsula was now ruler of the largest empire the world had yet seen, and all but master of Europe. During those exhilarating years of outward glory, Teresa of Avila lived and witnessed ironically to another, inward glory, to the sacred truth that becomes the rich possession of every genuine mystic, that a person's greatest good is within and "won by giving up everything" (ch. 20,27).

Born during the reign of the Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, Teresa saw, under Charles V, Castile's high moment of prosperity. Under Philip II, she saw her king's struggles against Protestant and Morisco rebels, against the Netherlands in the north and the Turks in the Mediterranean—not to mention Philip's many other activities in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the New World.

Teresa's grandfather, a Toledan merchant, a Jewish *converso* (Christianized Jew), victim of the use of religion for the sake

of political unity, had to accuse himself before the Inquisition for judaizing and as a penance was compelled to wear in procession for seven Fridays the humiliating *sanbenito*. After his reconciliation, out of necessity, he moved with his family to Avila where he was able to continue in his profession as a cloth merchant. One of his sons, Teresa's father Alonso, was about fourteen when the family arrived in Avila. In 1505 Alonso married; but two years later his wife died, leaving him two children. Alonso, after four years, married again, this time Doña Beatriz de Ahumada, who on March 28, 1515, gave birth to a daughter and future saint who received her grandmother's name—Teresa de Ahumada. Doña Beatriz died at the age of thirty-three, leaving behind from her marriage ten children.

Biographers have given posterity a detailed description of Teresa de Ahumada. She was medium in height and tended to be more plump than thin. Her unusual face could not be described as either round or aquiline; the skin was white and the cheeks flesh-colored. Her forehead was broad, her eyebrows somewhat thick, their dark brown color having a reddish tinge. Her eyes were black, lively, and round, not very large but well placed and protruding a little. The nose was small; the mouth medium in size and delicately shaped, and her chin was well proportioned. The white teeth sparkled and were equal in size. Three tiny moles, considered highly ornamental in those days, added further grace to her appearance; one below the center of the nose, the second over the left side of her mouth, the third beneath the mouth on the same side. Her hair was a shining black and gently curled.

In many ways an extravert, she was cheerful and friendly, a happy conversationalist, whom people found pleasing to hear as well as look at. Besides her talent as a writer, she was also gifted in the use of the needle and in household tasks.

Her undaunted spirit first began to show signs of itself when she was only seven and decided to set off with her brother Rodrigo for the land of the Moors to have her head cut off for Christ. With much the same ardor she enjoyed playing hermit life with other children—praying, giving alms, and doing penances. While she was growing up in this quiet atmosphere

of piety, the revolt of the *Comuneros* took place, shaking all Castile. This was a movement of angry reaction to a long period in which royal government had eroded many of the traditional powers and prerogatives of the Castilian towns. During this period, too—in 1525 to be precise—the Imperialist army, largely through Spanish troops, won the greatest victory of the age at Pavia. Two years later Charles V's armies broke from control and put Rome to the most terrible sack it had ever endured.

It was at about the time of this latter incident that the piety of the now adolescent Teresa began to grow cold. She became over eager to read romantic tales of chivalry, began to cultivate her feminine charms, and to plan a possible marriage. The absorption of her fantasy with chivalrous themes along with her facility for writing stirred her at this time to try, together with her brother, writing a book, of the kind she liked to read. In the judgment of her early Jesuit biographer, Ribera, it contained "much that could be said for it."

As time went on, after her mother's death in November 1528, Teresa began to meet with opposition at home because of her affection for her cousins, sons of her aunt Doña Elvira de Cepeda, and her friendship with a frivolous, unidentified relative whose influence was not of the kind that strengthened Teresa's piety. Teresa was later to look back with much distaste upon this whole period in which she lost the fervor of her early years. On the watch for an excuse to free his daughter from the vain company and enticements she was experiencing, Don Alonso found one, in 1531, when his oldest daughter married. At the age of sixteen Teresa was entrusted to the care of the Augustinian nuns of Our Lady of Grace in Avila.

Since there was no public education system in Spain at the time, Don Alonso's daughter probably learned how to read and write at home. Nor could one compare what was offered to her in the way of education at Our Lady of Grace to any modern boarding school. The nuns did little more, we now conjecture, than prepare the young girls for their future life in marriage, teaching them the usual household tasks: cooking, sewing, embroidery, and other things of that sort. Undoubtedly the girls also received some basic religious instructions. The gentle, friend-

ly nun, Doña María Briceño, who had charge of the girls and carefully watched over them, was a woman of deep prayer. As things turned out she began to mean more to Teresa than all former friends. Doña María loved to talk about prayer, and her high spiritual ideals made Don Alonso's daughter begin to think about a vocation to the religious life and feel more favorable to the idea. But it seems the strain caused by the inner struggle over the pros and cons of the life of a nun harmed Teresa's health so that she had to leave the school.

When her health improved, she was brought to her sister's house in Castellanos de la Cañada, but with a stop along the way for a visit with her uncle Don Pedro de Cepeda, who lived as a hermit in Hortigosa. He introduced her to spiritual books, which helped her in the struggles she was experiencing over her vocation. The *Letters* of St. Jerome, finally, became the occasion of her courage to make a definite decision. But then, unable to bear the thought of separation, her father refused to give his consent to her becoming a nun. On November 2, 1535, at the age of twenty, she once again stole away from her father's house, this time not to go off to the land of the Moors but to give her life to God as a nun in the Carmelite monastery of the Incarnation. Yet the action was not the result of so cold or indifferent an attitude to her father's feelings as it may seem to have been. She later was to write: "When I left my father's house I felt the separation so keenly that the feeling will not be greater, I think, when I die. For it seemed that every bone in my body was being sundered" (ch. 4, 1). Don Alonso, in fact, accepted it all with resignation, gave her a dowry that was more than substantial, and acquired for his daughter a private room of her own in the monastery.

Life at the Incarnation

Recent studies have shown that at the time of Teresa's entry the Incarnation numbered among eleven Carmelite monasteries for nuns in Spain. Its canonical status lay midway between that of the *sanctimoniales*, those with the obligation to choir office and

enclosure, and that of the *beaterios*, where the life resembled tertiary life. The nuns were required to recite the Divine Office but not to observe enclosure. They engaged in no outside forms of service. Some two hundred persons, including servants and nuns' relatives, were living together at the Incarnation in Teresa's days there.

Contrary to common belief, religious life at the Incarnation was austere. Days each week were set aside for fasting and abstinence; silence was carefully maintained so as to encourage the spirit of continual prayer. With many kinds of detailed, minute rubrics, the Divine Office was celebrated in solemnity and splendor. No time, however, was designated in the legislation for mental prayer—a deficiency not without its drawbacks in what must have been a crowded monastery. Novices received instructions about the Carmelite order, its eremitical origins, its devotion to the Blessed Virgin and to the prophets Elijah and Elisha. They were also trained in the practice of the intricate ceremonies used in the chanting of the Divine Office.

Oddly enough and irrespective of the Carmelite rule's exhortation to continual prayer, Teresa states that until reading Osuna's *Third Spiritual Alphabet*, given to her later by her uncle, she didn't know how to go about praying or being recollected. The spiritual books she mentions were by Franciscan not Carmelite authors, and she offers no clear indication of receiving instruction about mental prayer during her novitiate training.

Although Teresa's decision about her vocation had been costly, once she was inside the monastery she threw herself into the life with zest and found that it, in fact, delighted her. But shortly after her profession, which took place two years later, her health gave way once more. Authors can only speculate about the nature of this illness. Teresa herself attributes it to the food and lifestyle at the Incarnation. After the doctors admitted they could find no cure for her sickness, her worried father decided to bring her to Becedas for treatment by a quack, famous there for many cures. The harsh, painful methods of cure, lasting three months, only aggravated Teresa's poor condition; in fact they almost killed her. She was brought back, a pitiful sight, to Avila, where she remained an invalid and paralytic for three years—until, as she

devoutly testifies, through the intercession of her glorious father St. Joseph, she was able to walk again. But, probably as a consequence, she suffered the rest of her life from miserable health, a wide variety of illnesses. Antonio Aguiar, after his medical examination of Teresa when she was sixty-seven and nearing the end of her life, claimed that it was impossible to find the focal cause of her illnesses because her body had become a whole arsenal of ailments.

Able to get about again, Teresa next experienced a protracted period of great difficulty with prayer. She writes: "And very often, for some years, I was more anxious that the hour I had determined to spend in prayer be over than I was to remain there. . . and so unbearable was the sadness I felt on entering the oratory, that I had to muster up all my courage" (ch. 8, 7). According to Fr. Efrén, her most recent biographer, her difficulties amounted chiefly to a problem of technique. She didn't realize that the mind, or imagination, and feelings can wander, as St. John of the Cross points out, while the soul on a deeper level many remain quiet in a hardly perceptible contemplation. These difficulties with prayer went on for about eighteen years until she experienced before a very devotional image of the wounded Christ and again while reading from the *Confessions of St. Augustine* some unusually strong and efficacious feelings of compunction. On these two occasions of peak experience she learned to lose completely any trust she had in herself and place it all in His Majesty.

Compunction is a basic sentiment running through the entire *Life*. To the undiscerning or inexperienced, Teresa's outpourings of compunction might seem like exaggerated guilt feelings. But for Teresa, true sorrow does not disquiet, does not agitate. Her compunction consoled her; permeated with humility, it was a gift—quiet, gentle, and in the light (ch. 30, 9). The Desert Fathers, in fact, constantly exhorted their disciples to pray for the gift of compunction, the gift of tears. These Fathers felt that when the soul was softened by this interior weeping, God would give the experience of his light; in the shadow of sorrow was to be found the spiritual joy of enlightenment. And so it was with Teresa. In addition, her feelings of compunction later

became more intense through the mystical experience she had of God's transcendent majesty, and of the shabbiness of sin beside His boundless outpouring love. Spiritual humiliations preceded her spiritual exaltations. "I don't recall His ever having granted me one of the very notable favors of which I shall speak if not at a time when I was brought to nothing at the sight of my wretchedness" (ch. 22, 12).

Teresa began, then, at the time of this conversion, to experience passively and in a living way the presence of God in the center of her soul. To qualify experiences in prayer that she couldn't acquire through her own efforts but that were experienced passively Teresa often used the term "supernatural." With the onset of the supernatural another, new life began for her. "This is another, new book from here on" (ch. 23, 1).

Unfamiliar, unusual experiences started to occur, and Teresa, not yet enlightened about the stages of prayer, felt the surge of a new fear. "His Majesty began to give me the prayer of quiet very habitually — and often, of union — which lasted a long while. Since at that time other women had fallen into serious illusions and deceptions caused by the devil, I began to be afraid" (ch. 23, 2). The fear so increased that, she says, it made her diligently seek spiritual persons for consultations, marking the beginning of her struggles to explain her supernatural experiences. This recourse to spiritual men, and learned ones as well, led ultimately to the writing of her *Life*.

In the Context of Her Times

Readers nowadays can not readily grasp the reason for Teresa's fears, and for those of her confessors, unless they have some notion of the spiritual movements and problems existing in Spain during the sixteenth century. Spain at that time was a world in effervescence not only politically but also spiritually. A longing for deep spirituality took hold among the people themselves and pervaded their lives, having at its center three basic characteristics: a call to the interior life; the practice of mental prayer; and strong leanings toward higher levels of the mystical life. Giving support to this spiritual rebirth was the Spanish

Catholic reform initiated before the Council of Trent and championed by the militantly fervent and energetic Cardinal Cisneros. It coincided with the first half of Teresa's life. Prior to the work of Teresa there were other highly influential reform movements, those of St. John of Avila, St. Ignatius of Loyola, the Benedictines, the Franciscans, and the Dominicans. Newly founded printing presses offered to the people a large supply of literature on prayer and the interior life: translations from the Fathers, from the Italian, Flemish, and German schools, from Erasmus, the scholastics, the Protestants, and the humanists. The cross-fertilization of ideas that resulted from contact among these schools and movements was only to be expected.

Previously, medieval Spain had been the most tolerant land in Europe, with Christian, Mohammedan, and Jew living there side by side in peace and sometimes, in the closest friendship. But such relations did not last; in a country devoid of political unity a common faith was gradually seen to serve as a tool for binding together Castilians, Aragonese, and Catalans. In the constant interplay between politics and religion, the establishment of an Inquisition throughout Spain was seen as a convenient means to further the cause of Spanish unity, deepening the sense of common national purpose.

Now since in the Netherlands Christianity had developed a strong pietist strain, tending to stress mental prayer at the expense of forms and ceremonies, and in the Florence of Savonarola it had acquired a visionary, apocalyptic character, having an appeal to a number of Spanish Franciscans at that time in Italy, Spain was to find devotees for both these types of Christianity—particularly among devout women, often referred to as *beatas*, and among Franciscans of *converso* origin. It was only in the early years of the sixteenth century, however, that these types began to inspire any form of religious movement. For along with a push for the reform of the ecclesial community and of individuals, they gave rise to an illuminist movement which produced excellent as well as distorted forms of spirituality. Its members were known as *alumbrados*.

The *alumbrados* linked up with the movement of Erasmus in its stress on inwardness and its reaction against the misuse of

devotional practices and formalism. They later divided into groups having common trends but distinguished by certain differences. Those known as the *recogidos* attached highest importance to recollection. This term referred to the effort the soul makes to withdraw from and forget everything, created so as to allow itself to be penetrated by the divine action. The other group, called the *dejados*, built its spirituality on the idea of self-abandonment.

In the course of years an evolution took place that accentuated the slightly divergent directions. The partisans of recollection were very largely of the religious orders. Their efforts were directed to building up a technique of the interior life and mental prayer for the sake of helping souls along the path to total nakedness of spirit and union with God. These partisans gradually became known as the "spiritual men," or "men of experience." Since this recollection was practiced above all among the Franciscans, it was not surprising that a Franciscan friar, named Osuna, should give the movement its definitive expression in his *Third Spiritual Alphabet*.

The supporters of abandonment on the other hand insisted more and more, sometimes imprudently, on the importance of interior inspiration and passivity and opposed all exterior devotion. This form was promoted particularly by the Franciscan, Isabel de la Cruz and her disciple, a layman, Pedro de Alcaraz.

The heart of the spirituality by the *alumbrados* is identical with that of other illuminist movements. It brings into greater focus the importance of mental prayer, contemplation, and the manifestations of mystical phenomena. In this sense, Osuna, Laredo, and Teresa herself can be considered among the *alumbrados*. Where there was danger, it lay in exaggeration, in an exclusivism with which these themes were proposed, and in the practical consequences of such distortions. For example, through mental prayer one acquits oneself of everything else—works of penance, asceticism, and virtue. Furthermore, it was taught that as a means of avoiding any detriment to abandonment, recollection, or quiet, one should abstain from interior acts and exterior works, even from turning one's thoughts to Christ in His humanity. All of this, it was claimed, as well as obedience, did harm

to the union contracted with God through passivity and abandonment. Once united to God through passivity and abandonment a person could not sin. As always this unqualified teaching gave rise to some depraved moral consequences. For example, in 1529 the Inquisition arrested a leading woman illuminist, Francisca Hernández. The circle this attractive woman gathered around her in Valladolid consisted of *alumbrados*, some of whom, it seems, freed from their qualms by such a theory, brought their spiritual companionship with her down to the level of the physical.

In addition, an unrestrained infatuation with ecstasy and other extraordinary phenomena developed. These experiences were thought of as something to be obtained at all costs. Among some noted but deceptive visionaries of the time was the stigmatic, María de Santo Domingo (1486-1524), known as the Beata of Piedrahita. Her monastery became a center of spirituality and high prayer; she herself wrote a book on prayer and contemplation. But soon the Master General of the Dominicans had to isolate her because of certain aberrations and prophetic revelations. No one in the order, with the exception of her confessor, was allowed to converse with her or administer the sacraments to her; nor was anyone allowed to speak about her prophecies, ecstasies, and raptures, except to the provincial.

Another visionary, Magdalena de la Cruz, a Poor Clare with a reputation for holiness, severe fasts, and long vigils, also bearing the stigmata, let it be known that she no longer required any food except the consecrated Host in daily Communion. In an investigation by the Inquisition she confessed to being a secret devil worshiper. Inspired by two incubuses with whom she had made a pact, she became very skillful at all sorts of legerdemain. Through her success in fooling both bishops and kings, she brought the fear of being deceived to all of Spain.

Turning its attention understandably to the activities of the *alumbrados*, the Inquisition condemned, in 1525, forty-eight illuminist propositions. That same year a decree was promulgated against the heresies of Luther, for the Inquisition suspected that Lutheranism and Illuminism were closely connected in that both movements emphasized internal religion at the expense of out-

ward ceremonial. Anyone suspected of illuminist practices was quickly taken into custody, the net having been thrown wide enough to ensnare even St. Ignatius of Loyola, who was forbidden to preach for three years. Followers of Erasmus as well fell into disfavor.

The driving force behind the revolt of the *Comuneros* had been hatred of the foreigner and of foreign ways and ideas. Although the *Comuneros* were defeated, naturally enough the many ideas that inspired them lived on, defended and upheld by the more conservative members of the religious orders. If the friars who ran the Inquisition bridled at alien briefs, they also acted under the impulse of fear, a fear that in a land where heterodox views abounded new heresies might easily take root. The result was a tendency to generate a climate of mistrust and mutual suspicion, one peculiarly propitious for the informer and the spy—victims never being informed of their accusers, and accusers often finding an ideal opportunity for the settlement of old scores. Authors even of non-theological works tended just the same to exercise a kind of self-censorship, if only to keep their writings free of anything capable of misleading the ignorant and the uneducated.

There is no reason to assume, on the other hand, that the Inquisition was the sole source of constraint. Suspicion of those who deviated from the common norm was deeply rooted in sixteenth-century Spain, even though deviation was more normal there than elsewhere. People could be suspect because of their race just as well as because of their faith. In addition to all the concern about purity of faith there was an inordinate concern about purity of blood.

Another prevalent fear in the society of Teresa's time was fear of the devil. From the fourteenth century the attention of Christians turned more and more to the devil and his powers, and fear of his forces and wiles loomed large. The measured terms and prudent skepticism with which St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century had dealt with the subject of diabolical temptations and marvels had been too readily ignored. The idea gradually grew more widespread that woman, the daughter of Eve, could serve as Satan's intermediary in order the more easily

to tempt man and draw him to evil. The diabolical powers that astounded the masses made the Inquisitors feel that they were at grips with supernatural powers.

If we keep all of this in mind, it is not difficult for us to understand why the times were weighed down by distrust of mental prayer, especially that practiced by women (nuns, beatas, or "foolish women"), by suspicion of spiritual books that fostered the practice, and by an open hostility toward mystical manifestations, symptoms of a certain morbid religiosity or of Illuminism. It is not a wonder that there was skepticism and caution among Teresa's directors over her unusual experiences. Nor a wonder that Teresa herself, though she experienced certitude during the actual moments when she received these favors, began to feel doubts and fears that she might be a victim of diabolical deception. She herself testifies: "since at that time other women had fallen into serious illusions and deceptions caused by the devil, I began to be afraid. I experienced wonderful delight and sweetness . . . and in addition I was aware of the greatest assurance that this delight was from God, especially when I was in prayer . . . But after a little distraction I began to fear and wonder whether the devil, making me think the experience was good, wanted me to suspend the intellect . . . this fear increased in such a way that it made me diligently seek out spiritual persons to consult" (ch. 23, 2). Some zealous individuals went so far as to warn her confessor to be careful of her. "I feared that I would have no one who would hear my confession, but that all would run from me" (ch. 28, 14).

Teresa came to realize in the midst of these suspicions that the safest course of action was to hide nothing from her confessor, to lay open before him the whole state of her soul and tell simply and humbly about the favors she received. She also came to the conclusion that the confessor should be learned and that she should obey. Not without some perplexity, she discovered, in turn, that when she obeyed her confessor's direction to resist the favors, they only increased (ch. 29, 7). Through her experience Teresa also acquired the ability to discern when a passive experience was not the result of the workings of God's grace. "I have so much experience now of when something is

from the devil that since he at present sees that I understand him, he doesn't torment me in this way as often as he used to. He is recognized clearly by the disturbance and disquiet with which he begins, by the agitation the soul feels as long as his work lasts, by the darkness and affliction he places in the soul, and by dryness and the disinclination toward prayer or toward any good work" (ch. 30, 9).

If people can be misled and deceived by desires for God's favors in prayer, these favors in themselves are not to be disparaged, being, as they were for Teresa, a source of fortitude and strengthening in faith. The foretaste of heavenly things left her with feelings of detachment she could hardly believe after having had so much experience with her own futile efforts, and it prepared her for her mission. "By these gifts, the Lord gives us the fortitude that by our sins we are losing. If people don't have, along with a living faith, some pledge of the love God has for them, they will not desire to be despised and belittled by everyone and have all the other great virtues that the perfect possess. For our nature is so dead that we go after what we see in the present. Thus these very favors are what awaken faith and strengthen it" (ch. 10, 6).

Though Teresa feared greatly that she might be deceived by her experiences, go astray, and lose her Lord, the Inquisition was not the type of thing that could frighten her. When others approached and cautioned her with such fears, she writes: "This amused me and made me laugh. . . . And I said they shouldn't be afraid about these possible accusations; that it would be pretty bad for my soul if there were something in it of the sort that I should have to fear the Inquisition; that I thought if I did have something to fear I'd go myself to seek out the Inquisitors" (ch. 33, 5). What was considered the most ignominious thing that could happen to a person at that time, Teresa saw as a fortuitous opportunity to submit her spirit totally to the judgment of the Church. Any disgrace involved she did not look upon as a cause for shrinking in terror but as a chance to grow in love for her Lord. Though subsequently accused at different times before the Inquisition, she was never found guilty.

In general it can be said that where there was exaggeration,

Teresa in her time was a sign of contradiction; where there were aspects of truth, she was a reconciler. Stressing throughout her life the absolute necessity of prayer and the interior life, her path was that of a devotee of Christ. She found it extremely difficult to be open to any system of mysticism that would demand setting aside the corporeal for the sake of mounting to the spiritual. Devotion to Christ in His humanity was never for her an obstacle to the most perfect contemplation. The obstacle for her was the mistaken notion that all thought of Him must be set aside; to do this, she stated, would impede "raptures and visions and other favors God grants to souls" (ch. 22, 2). She believes that in trying to rid themselves of any thought of the human Christ so as to approach the Divinity many souls do not pass beyond the prayer of union. Paintings and images of Christ, these simple means, were greatly prized and devoutly venerated by Teresa, devotion never being a roadblock for her. But when God desired to suspend all the faculties in the higher degrees of prayer—yes, then the presence of the humanity of Christ is taken away. "Then let it be so—gladly; blessed be such a loss that enables us to enjoy more that which it seems is lost" (ch. 22, 9). "When one is in the midst of business matters, and in times of persecution and trials, when one can't maintain so much quietude, and in other times of dryness, Christ is a very good friend because we behold Him as man and see Him with weaknesses and trials—and He is company for us" (ch. 22, 10). Her spirited defence of friendship with and devotion to Him even in higher stages of the mystical life did not spring from any special talent she had for picturing things with her imagination. "For God didn't give me talent for discursive thought or for a profitable use of the imagination. In fact, my imagination is so dull that I never succeeded even to think about and represent in my mind—as hard as I tried—the humanity of the Lord" (ch. 4, 7). Frequently, as a result, in speaking of meditation she has in mind a simple quiet presence to Christ through one of His earthly mysteries. "But one should not always weary oneself in seeking these reflections but just remain there in His presence with the intellect quiet. And if we are able we should occupy ourselves in looking at Christ who is looking at us" (ch. 13, 22).

News that the sacred images of Christ and His saints were being destroyed in other parts of Christian Europe was a torment to her. Even a simple devotional object like holy water left her with the imprint of its efficacy. "The power of holy water must be great. For me there is a particular and very noticeable consolation my soul experiences upon taking it. Without a doubt my soul feels ordinarily a refreshment I wouldn't know how to explain, like an interior delight that comforts it entirely. . . and I rejoice to see the power of those words recited over the water so that its difference from unblessed water becomes so great" (ch. 31, 4). On the other hand, those devotions popular in her day, especially among women, that were downright superstitious, she confesses she never cared for (ch. 6, 6).

The first two persons Teresa consulted about her experiences decided after examining her written testimony that her supernatural experiences were from the devil. Told not to remain alone, she seldom dared to stay in a room by herself during the daytime. Once, while terrified that the devil would deceive her, agitated and weary and not knowing what to do, she heard the Lord speak to her. "I was given calm together with fortitude, courage, security, quietude, and light so that in one moment I saw my soul become another" (ch. 25, 18). The words of His Majesty liberated her from the unnecessary and terrible fears of the devil with which society had burdened her. As for devils, she could then say with complete freedom: "I pay no more attention to them than to flies" (ch. 25, 20). The key element of her teaching about the devil, then, so psychologically and spiritually sound, is the utter uselessness of all fears concerning him. "I don't understand these fears, 'The devil! The devil!', when we can say 'God! God!', and make the devil tremble" (ch. 25, 22). With disapproving words she concludes this little section: "I fear those who have such great fear of the devil more than I do the devil himself, for he can't do anything to me. Whereas these others, especially if they are confessors, cause severe disturbance" (ch. 25, 22).

A deep division slowly developed in Spain between those persons Teresa refers to as learned men (theologians or intellectuals) and spiritual men (those with experience in prayer, who

nowadays might be referred to as mystics or charismatics). The men of learning often scorned quietism, distrusted prayer, and spoke deprecatingly of the mystical life, especially when promoted among women. They denounced to the Inquisition books dealing with all such matters. On the other hand, the spiritual men often looked down on theologians as professionals in the letter of the law but lacking in the spirit; they grimaced at any mention of the competence of these men in spiritual matters and declared them to be inept in the business of guiding souls.

The intellectualist tendency, spearheaded by the schools of Salamanca and by Dominican theologians, was definitively assumed and imposed as the norm of the Inquisition. Two of the more notorious among the theologians were the formidable Dominican, Melchior Cano, and the Archbishop of Seville and Supreme Inquisitor, Fernando Valdés. Cano taught that the practice of mental prayer was a danger not only for the Church but for the Christian republic as well. Rather incredibly for so illustrious a theologian, he reasoned that since it is impossible to devote oneself to both the active and the contemplative life, colleges and universities would have to be suppressed, books closed, and studies annihilated if all were to dedicate themselves to prayer. As for the assertion that the practice of prayer serves for the acquisition of virtue more than any other practice does, he complained that it was ridiculous.

In 1559, Fernando Valdés published an index of forbidden books among which were included almost all books dealing with prayer; cherished spiritual books by the most renowned contemporary Spanish authors as well as translations from classic writers: St. Francis Borgia, St. John of Avila, Luis of Granada, Osuna, Tauler, Harphius, and Denis the Carthusian. Many of Teresa's favorites.

The prohibition of Francis Borgia's *Obras del Cristiano*, it is interesting parenthetically to note, is perhaps more easily explained in view of the anti-Jesuit sentiments prevalent in the Spanish Church in the sixteenth century. Never one to make facile condemnations, Teresa, despite what others thought, felt high esteem for the Fathers of the Society, and she consulted Father Francis personally, finding him to be a wonderful help because, as she

says, he was a man of experience, one who “was advancing in the favors and gifts of God” (ch. 24, 3). In her judgment the Jesuits were spiritual men, men of prayer and experience: “I see that what happened was all for my greater good, that I might get to know and deal with people as holy as are those of the Society of Jesus” (ch. 23, 3,9,15).

Despite the Inquisition and Melchior Cano and the index, this Carmelite nun had little doubt about the central place prayer must take. She views prayer as the source of the good things God worked in her. Turning away from prayer would be the equivalent of shutting the door on God who longs to share His life intimately with us. So her tribute to a spiritual and experienced man like St. Peter of Alcántara is glowing. And she agrees also with him that there are many more women than men to whom God grants His favors (ch. 40, 8).

Experience in prayer and prudence, she taught, were the more necessary qualifications in the spiritual direction of beginners. “I say that if these learned men do not practice prayer their learning is of little help to beginners” (ch. 13, 16). On the other hand, she cautioned that anyone experiencing favors, women especially, should consult learned men. “Let not the spiritual person,” she wisely warns and reasons, “be misled by saying that learned men without prayer are unsuitable for those who practice it. . . . For though some don’t have experience, they don’t despise the Spirit nor do they ignore it, because in Sacred Scripture, which they study, they always find the truth of the good spirit” (ch. 13, 18). Learning was of particular value, then, in the cases of those who had begun to experience God’s favors. The learned man could discern if one were walking in conformity with the truths taught in Scripture. But expertise in Scripture studies doesn’t make up for experience and humility; so there may be much that is baffling to the learned man. He may prove somewhat obtuse in puzzling over the infused loving experience that the psychologist William James, exploring the varieties of religious experience, apologetically but not without sarcasm refers to as an amatory flirtation between the devotee and the deity. But Teresa’s source of wisdom was her Lord, and she has some motherly-sounding advice for the learned man in his quandary: “As for the rest he

shouldn't kill himself or think he understands what he doesn't. . . . Let him not be surprised. . . . that the Lord makes a little old woman wiser, perhaps, in this science than he is, even though he is a very learned man" (ch. 34, 11, 12).

Teresa could not be content that men of learning be simply men of learning. She suffered too keenly because she had no one to consult who had experience of the spiritual path she was being drawn along (ch. 28, 18). Deficient in experience, those she consulted frequently disturbed and afflicted her (ch. 40, 8). It was Friar Peter of Alcántara, austere and saintly, who ultimately understood her and, through his own experience, was able to explain things, comfort, and encourage her.

With her ideal that men of learning be also men of experience, or spiritual men, Teresa managed to win the illustrious Dominican theologians García de Toledo and Pedro Ibáñez to the path of prayer. Through her charming influence, dedicating themselves earnestly to this newly discovered way, they soon themselves began to experience God's favors. Contrary to the prosaic teaching of some scholars of the time that many years of arduous asceticism were required before there could be any passivity in the spiritual life, the Lord, Teresa taught, follows no fixed time schedules. Often "the contemplation the Lord doesn't give to one in twenty years He gives to another in one" (ch. 34, 11). Instances of this fact she observed, too, in the young Sisters entering the newly established monastery of St. Joseph (ch. 39, 10). Of Pedro Ibáñez, "the most learned man" in Avila, she writes: "I told him then as clearly as I could about all the visions and my manner of prayer and the great favors the Lord granted me. I begged him to consider my prayer very carefully and tell me if there was something opposed to Sacred Scripture and what he felt about it all. . . . For although he was very good, from then on he dedicated himself much more to prayer and withdrew to a monastery of his order where there was much solitude so that he could practice prayer better" (ch. 33, 5). When she saw him again and heard of his happiness for having done what intensified his life of prayer, she was the recipient of some of its benefits: "And I, too, was able to agree because previously he assured me and consoled me only by his learning, but now

he did so also through his spiritual experiences" (ch. 33, 6). In chapter thirty-four she tells of how, when she considered the striking talents and gifts of García de Toledo, she felt an uncontrollable longing that he give himself entirely to God and of how this prayer was answered and God began to favor him.

Worth recalling is that in the Spain of that time the faithful were unable to read Scripture, unless, of course, they had knowledge of Latin, since no vernacular edition was permitted. Teresa had to turn to other spiritual books, which usually abounded with quotations from Scripture. When many spiritual books were placed on Valdés's Index, she was beside herself, wondering what to do. In the midst of her consternation she received a locution from the Lord telling her not to be sad but that He would become for her a living book. Subsequently she began to receive mystical understanding of many truths His Majesty wanted to teach her and, as a result, felt little or almost no need for books (ch. 26, 5). Because of her consequent lack of spiritual books dealing with prayer, she later wrote her own books to explain and give instructions to her new followers about the path to union with God.

Her First Spiritual Directors

The early group of censors and confessors that played a role in Teresa's story was made up of about eight persons. Francisco de Salcedo, the first whom she consulted, was a pious layman, who had been practicing mental prayer for about forty years and had diligently followed the course in theology at the College of St. Thomas for twenty years, never, it seems, being able to hear enough about the sacred science. It was he who received the first account of Teresa's life and sins, the first sketch of her future book. Salcedo, bewildered, in turn consulted the ascetical priest, Gaspar Daza. They were the two who concluded that her experiences were from the devil, and unrelentingly held to this conclusion for a number of years.

Following the suggestion of the well-intentioned Salcedo, Teresa next consulted the Jesuits. Those she approached at this time were young, little more than half her age. Diego de Cetina,

the first, was twenty-four, and one year a priest. After only a couple of months he was transferred and followed by Juan de Prádanos, twenty-seven, but also only one year ordained. After serving two years as Teresa's confessor, this second was also transferred. The third, most noted, was Baltasar Alvarez, twenty-five or twenty-six, and one year ordained at the time he consented to accept the task of directing Teresa.

Perplexed and wavering in his guidance of this extraordinary woman, Alvarez was, nonetheless, heroic in standing by her, ever willing and quick to give a boost to her sagging spirits during the crucial years when everything seemed to be going wrong. But his own uncertainties lagged on and were slow to dissipate completely. Only ten years later, when he began to feel drawn himself into the mystical path of prayer, did he win total peace about the experiences of *Madre* Teresa. Once, years later, he laconically confided to Ribera, pointing to a large pile of books: "All those books I read in order to understand Teresa of Jesus."

In the group of Dominicans three eminent figures stand out: García de Toledo, Pedro Ibáñez, and Domingo Báñez. García de Toledo, to whom Teresa relates as to a disciple as well as to a director and confessor, and whom she calls "my father and my son," is addressed directly in the *Life* as though Teresa were writing him a letter. A true aristocrat, being a nephew of the Count of Oropesa and cousin of the Viceroy of Peru, it was he, most likely, who urged Teresa not to worry about going on at too much length or about getting lost in a multiplicity of details. He had held various offices within his order, including that of provincial of Peru. Having known him from some years before, Teresa met him once again in Toledo, an event she speaks of enthusiastically in chapter 34. Within a short while, through her influence and prayers, he underwent a more complete conversion to God and began to grasp, by his own deeper experiences, a great deal more about spiritual matters.

Pedro Ibáñez was a professor of theology. Little by little Teresa opened her soul to him, and he, in turn, was attracted to prayer. Her account of his death, a death that took place before she finished the second redaction of her book, provides us with a notion of the kind of person for whom she was writing initially:

“His prayer had reached such a degree that at the time of his death when he wanted to avoid mental prayer because of his great weakness, he couldn’t on account of his many raptures. He wrote to me a little before he died asking what he should do, because when he finished saying Mass he often went into rapture without being able to prevent it” (ch. 38, 13).

Domingo Báñez didn’t appear on stage until the spring of 1562. Highly respected for his powers of mind and his doctrinal authority, he had some influence on the definitive redaction of the *Life* and played a part in the later history of the manuscript, giving a favorable opinion of it to the Inquisition.

Two other persons, who were a consolation and great help to Teresa, were later canonized by the Church: Francis Borgia, the Duke of Gandía, who renounced all and entered the Jesuits; and Peter of Alcántara, the Franciscan penitent and reformer.

A Report in Writing

At the time Teresa took up her pen to begin *The Book of Her Life* she was approaching fifty and had been experiencing a steady flow of mystical grace for close to ten years. She was obliged, finally, to report in writing her unusual and sometimes disconcerting experiences so as to submit all to the judgment of professionals. She did not at once meet with the best of fortune. Neither Salcedo nor Daza were prepared to deal with anything of this kind and depth. Fearful about her experiences, as was mentioned, they obliged her to go from one counselor to another, Jesuit as well as Dominican. These counselors, in turn, asked for detailed written information.

The painful difficulty for Teresa was that, though she could give a report in word and writing of her sins, the mystical life she was experiencing stubbornly resisted all her attempts to describe it. Her final resort was Laredo’s *Ascent of Mount Sion*, in which she underlined and marked passages that seemed to be telling of something similar to her own experiences. “For a long time, even though God favored me, I didn’t know what words to use to explain His favors: and this was no small trial” (ch. 12, 6). To give an adequate explanation of what she was

experiencing she still needed other graces. "For it is one grace," she later discovered, "to receive the Lord's favor; another, to understand which favor and grace it is; a third, to know how to describe it" (ch. 17, 5).

Still extant among Teresa's writings are some accounts of her spiritual state written before she wrote her *Life*. These are the first two of her *Spiritual Testimonies*. It was García de Toledo, the one most eager, it seems from what she says of him, to know all he could about her, who told her to write a more extended and detailed report of her whole spiritual life and not just of her actual state.

In the wealthy, somewhat peaceful surroundings of the palace of Doña Luisa de la Cerda, where she had been staying, at this noble lady's request and by order of her provincial, Teresa set her mind to the task of putting her work into paragraphs or chapters, she presented the finished product to Fr. García in June, 1562, before returning to Avila. The manuscript read more like a long letter, in which she frequently addressed the person for whom she wrote, carried on a dialogue with him, made appeals to his theological competence, and so on.

Unfortunately, the first draft of her *Life* has been lost. The learned Dominican priest did however read that composition, making some observations about certain phrases that seemed too strongly worded. He most probably shared the manuscript with some who were close friends, such as Ibáñez, and then returned it to its author with the request, again with his customary eagerness for further details, that she not only transcribe it but add an additional section on the foundation of St. Joseph's in Avila. This request, which Teresa ascribes to her confessors, reached her at the end of 1563, when she had been given verbal permission to reside in her new foundation—or perhaps later, after the year 1564 had begun. The second draft must have been written somewhat quickly amid the tranquil contemplative life of religious observance that was followed in her new monastery, in a cell stark for its poverty, without any comforts, without even a table or chair.

The revisions she made were not all minor ones. Anxious to make matters clear and herself understood, she added eleven

new chapters (from chapters 11 to 22 inclusive) in which, using the allegory of the four ways of watering a garden, she composed a complete little treatise on the degrees of prayer. She added, as well, the requested account of the foundation of St. Joseph's (chapters 32-36), and then tacked on four additional chapters, most gratifying we surmise to Fr. García, that tell of other extraordinary favors she received up until the end of 1565. This latter date accounts for the supposition that it was at this time she finished the book.

The Nature of Her Book

Although usually referred to as such, Teresa's book is not an autobiography; nor is it an intimate diary. What she deals with mainly are the supernatural (infused or mystical) realities of the interior life. Nonetheless, she does make use of autobiographical material as a backdrop against which she treats of the existence and value of the favors of God. The fragmentary and scattered biographical data comprise two levels, one exterior, the other interior. The difference between these two levels runs much deeper than any met with in everyday autobiographies. The exterior level deals with the historical facts; it is a personal chronicle limited in value. The interior level deals almost exclusively with the mystical facts, facts that by reason of their quality and depth lie beyond the layers of ordinary inner life, beyond the purely historical, and beyond the usual ways in which the psyche functions. It embraces higher states of consciousness, passive perception and love, relations with the transcendent God, intensification of the life of the spirit.

The evident preponderance of interior facts does not, however, prevent an interweaving of both levels that results in the ingenious plan of the book. As for the exterior events of her *Life*, the first part, 1515-1535, consists of twenty years of family life; the next twenty-seven years, 1535-1562, comprise her Carmelite life in the monastery of the Incarnation; the final period includes three years, 1562-1565, of her life at St. Joseph's, those initial years in her newly established form of Carmelite life, the expansion of which was to become her mission until her death in 1582.

As for the interior events, her life was by and large of an ascetical type until her conversion experience in 1554 (ch. 9, 1,8). For the next two years or so she experienced the first inpouring of mystical graces: feelings of God's presence, passive recollection and quiet, and the first tastes of union (ch. 9, 9; 10, 1). About 1557 she received her first locution and rapture (ch. 19, 9; 25, 5). From the following year until 1560 she had to resist persistently, in obedience to her confessor, the locutions and raptures (ch. 25, 1,15; 27, 2). In June, 1560, she had her first intellectual vision of the humanity of Christ (ch. 7, 2). In January, 1561, the sacred humanity in its risen form was represented to her in an imaginative vision (ch. 28, 3). For two and a half years, 1561-1563, she frequently received this favor (ch. 29, 2). This other more sublime favor belongs to the state she was in at the time of the writing of her book. It was a period of vehement impulses of love, spiritual wounds of love and the transpiercing of the soul. "You can't exaggerate or describe the way in which God wounds the soul and the extreme pain this wound produces, for it causes the soul to forget itself. Yet this pain is so delightful that there is no other pleasure in life that gives greater happiness" (ch. 29, 10). It feels that the only remedy for this painful sickness is death.

Before adding the final touches to her work, Teresa was raised to a still higher form of mystical experience. It is an experience, she teaches, that comes much later than all the visions and revelations she spoke of. The soul is lifted far above itself and brought into a vast solitude in which it experiences intense spiritual pain. Just as the powerful spiritual joy of union and rapture suspends the faculties, so in this form of prayer it is pain that suspends them. "Who could give a good explanation of this prayer . . . It is what my soul is now always experiencing. Usually when unoccupied it is placed in the midst of these anxious longings for death; and when it sees they are beginning, it fears that it will not die. But once in the midst of them, it would desire to spend the remainder of its life in this suffering, even though the suffering is so excessive a person cannot endure it. . . . I sometimes really think that if this prayer continues as it does now, the Lord would be served if my life came to an end, . . . I am oblivious of

everything in that anxious longing to see God; that desert and solitude seem to the soul better than all the companionship of the world. If anything could give the soul consolation, it would be to speak to someone who had suffered this torment" (ch. 20, 12-13). This painful spiritual fire never produced the death and subsequent vision of God she longed for. But what is worth pointing out is that the definitive work on her *Life* poured from her pen while she was at this particular milestone of her spiritual journey. In later works she speaks of a further deepening of her union with God, of a more gentle, peaceful fire in which the soul feels that it already enjoys the possession of God, although not the fruition, in which it goes about so forgetful of self that it thinks it has partly lost its being.

In giving personal testimony of her own experience, Teresa proceeds from her particular case to what can be said on a universal plane. In addition to a personal testimony, then, we have a teaching suitable for all. In giving her testimony she examines her conscience and analyzes her spiritual life, making an extraordinary effort to explain herself, and this truthfully and with simplicity. She tells of both sins and favors—"good things and bad." With the favors preponderating over the sins the balance between these two constitutive elements of her account is broken. Although this is partly due to the fact that in her story the mystical element did prevail over the ascetical, there is, nonetheless, the added factor that the real object of her testimony is the supernatural; to witness to the existence and the value of these realities of her inner life and to affirm their excellence and importance on a universal plane. The resultant intermingling of testimony and doctrine is a characteristic of Teresa's method of teaching. Never does she attempt to camouflage her ignorance nor does she need to. She frankly admits the problem she has with explaining herself clearly in writing; that she doesn't know the precise terminology; that she doesn't know philosophy and theology. Nor does she even have for her use so much as a Bible. Irrespective of her lack of means she has certitude, the certitude of incontestable experience. "I know through experience that what I say is true" (ch. 27, 11). A certitude that would not cower before renowned theologians. "The mystery of the Blessed

Trinity and other sublime things are so explained that there is no theologian with whom it [the soul] would not dispute in favor of the truth of these grandeurs" (ch. 27, 9).

Not all possess the charism to speak of the unutterable mystical experience, the grace of speech as Thomas Aquinas calls it (S. Th. 2-2, q.177, a.1-2). The Lord gave her his gift only after she had experienced years of stammering and powerlessness. By God's gift not only were her spoken words imbued with unction but her written ones were as well. Those who knew her testified that reading her words was like hearing her talk; the effect was the same, her manner of writing being the equivalent of her way of conversing. She herself was definitely aware of the divine source from which some of the pages flowed. "Many of the things I write about here do not come from my own head, but my heavenly Master tells them to me" (ch. 39, 8). She cherished her spiritual books and doesn't deny the debt contracted from some of them. But, though she thought she was understanding something of what she read in them, she later realized "that if the Lord didn't show me, I was able to learn little from books, because there was nothing I understood until His Majesty gave me understanding through experience" (ch. 22, 3). Often in setting about to describe a particular mystical state she begins to experience the very prayer she wants to describe. "I believe that on account of the humility your Reverence has shown in desiring to be helped by as simple-minded a person as myself, the Lord today after Communion granted me this prayer; and interrupting my thanksgiving, He put before me these comparisons, taught me the manner of explaining it, and what the soul must do here" (ch. 16, 2). Sometimes the force of the infused love welling up within her leaves a striking mark on what she writes. "Since while I write this I am not freed from such holy, heavenly madness coming from Your goodness and mercy — for You grant this favor without any merits on my part at all — either desire, my King, I beseech You, that all to whom I speak become mad from Your love, or do not permit that I speak to anyone!" (ch. 16, 4). She longs to attract souls to the practice of prayer and encourages them to persevere: longs that others be afflicted with her madness, and sick with her sickness

(ch. 19, 4; 16, 6).

Where did Teresa discover her message? In the story of her own life. There she found the lessons she must write about, the practical doctrine she thought could be helpful to all who might read her work. Unconcerned about abstract notions, conceptualizations, systems of thought, or articulated outlines, she preferred to tell her story and teach her doctrine without any literary artifices or aids.

The Plan of Her Book

Teresa's book, resembling a long letter, contained no pauses, divisions, intermediate titles, or any initial title. When she tried to divide the work into chapters and add chapter headings she met with unsurprising difficulty. According to the custom of the times each heading had to be a summary of the material covering the ten or twelve folios the chapter comprised, obliging her to figure out the common denominators, central themes, and bookish formulas that her digressions and letter-writing tone would allow. She rarely succeeded, but limited herself to suggesting the general idea of what was being discussed, and then often adding, with engaging simplicity, a few words of praise for what is written, or an ingenuous exhortation to read and allow oneself to be convinced.

With all this in mind, one supposes that the final result would have to be a jumble of themes, held only loosely together by the thread of her personal story. The supposition proves false. Amazingly enough, the structural plan results in a remarkable unity, developed with sharp, impeccable logic, and articulated in four sections expertly joined and almost equal in length. By combining the basic outline with a summary of the contents the following guide can be constructed.

1. She starts off by telling how from a very early age she began to receive God's abundant grace. She was introduced to the path of prayer and, in her early twenties, even led to some initial experience in mystical prayer. Though she repeatedly frustrated God's work, even to the point of abandoning prayer and the interior life, His mercy was finally victorious over her own sorry

state. When, in the end, she surrendered more totally to His grace, God began His admirable and more immediate work within her soul (chaps. 1-10).

2. So wonderful was this work that she finds it necessary, in order that it be understood, to present a detailed exposition of prayer, its nature, degrees, and effects. She goes about this task with the help of an allegory, that of four different ways of watering a garden: using buckets of water drawn from a well, the equal of meditation; using a bucket-type water wheel that has to be turned by hand, the equivalent of the prayer of recollection and quiet; diverting a stream along irrigation ditches, equal to the prayer of the sleep of the faculties; and allowing the garden to be watered with rain from heaven, the equivalent of the prayer of union (chaps. 11-22).

3. From the detailed exposition of these forms of prayer the reader understands more easily how the latter ways of watering were accomplished in the soul of Teresa; how the Lord purified her, flooded her with grace, allowed her to perceive His divine presence, hear His voice, penetrate the mysterious abyss of His trinitarian life, and come into contact with the most varied realities of the supernatural world. Throughout the pages of her book a steady series of rare and wonderful things is set before our minds: ecstasies, visions, locutions from God, transpiercing of the soul, infused love of the purest and strongest kind, new wisdom, the flowering of sturdy virtues, premonitions of a probable death of love, and foretastes of beatific life (chaps. 23-31).

4. A practical result of this outpouring of divine grace is the fruitfulness of her life of service. She observes that in the earlier period of her spiritual life only three persons, in the course of many years, profited from what she said to them. Later when she had been strengthened through God's favors, many profited within two or three years (ch. 13, 9). In Carmel itself, through the foundation of St. Joseph's she inaugurated a new, more contemplative lifestyle that stressed divine intimacy and was to spread throughout the entire world, serving as yeast, reminding all that if they seek resolutely through prayer the things that are above, they will soon enjoy the possession of perfect love, a blessing

more precious than any earthly thing (ch. 11, 1-2).

She begins, furthermore, to live with surprising intensity the mystery of the communion of saints. She deals on familiar terms with the saints in heaven. Her prayer bears special efficacy for those in purgatory as well as for those on earth; it also gives her dominion over demons (chaps. 32-40).

The basic structure of the book, then, consists of four parts:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1) Sins, graces, and vocation | 10 chapters |
| 2) Treatise on the degrees of prayer | 12 chapters |
| 3) Mystical life | 9 chapters |
| 4) Effects | 9 chapters |

Main Ideas

Teresa in a letter once called this work of hers the *Book of God's Mercies*. The infinite divine mercy, persistent and inexhaustible alongside our shoddy lives, provides the underlying doctrinal support of her *Life*. Convinced of her own misery, she is convinced too that the story of her life can serve as a dark backdrop for the glorious contrasting light of His Majesty's mercy. And what mercy; reckless and prodigal and lavish, without any seeming limits to the favors He bestowed.

Her doctrinal thesis rises out of her personal story. The mercy of God reaching out to the misery of humans is not an exception but a law. Mercy and munificence pervade the divine attitude, reaching out toward every soul. She is certain that everyone is called to the summit of the mountain where only the glory of God dwells, that God is keeping watch, waiting for the hour to give. Teresa, or the reader, can put off the hour; yet if and when it arrives, early or late (her early childhood or her late conversion), God will not fail to act with a generous mercy substantially identical with that referred to in the book. "Oh, what a good friend You make, my Lord! How you proceed by favoring and enduring. You wait for others to adapt to Your nature, and in the meanwhile You put up with theirs!" (ch. 8, 6). It is in this sense that Teresa's case is a typical one.

For the hour to arrive, an unavoidable condition is required: total surrender to God. "Let Your will be done in me in every

way, and may it not please Your Majesty that something as precious as Your love be given to anyone who serves You only for the sake of consolations" (ch. 11, 12). In addition, sounding like a wiry old Zen master, she insists again and again on determination. The determination must be joined to the surrender, determination to follow Christ in this way even though the dryness may last for one's whole life (ch. 11, 10). His Majesty wants this determination, and He is a friend of courageous souls (ch. 13, 1-3). Courage and determination, on the other hand, do not go without recompense. "But I have seen clearly that God does not leave one, even in this life, without a large reward" (ch. 11, 11).

Individuals then, must undergo a change in the recesses of their being before they can perceive and follow the delicate urgings of the Spirit, become somewhat like those newly-discovered precision instruments capable of the subtlest forms of reception and transmission. This requires the time and the effort. "The most we have to strive for in the beginning is to care for oneself alone and consider that there is nothing on earth but God and oneself" (ch. 13, 9).

This brings us to the central theme of her book: mental prayer, which she conceived of as "an intimate sharing between friends . . . taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us" (ch. 8, 5). This concept of prayer as a relationship between friends who know they love each other and need to be alone in order to share intimately their deepest feelings and thoughts is the simple and strikingly human Teresian characteristic of the path to perfection. Teresa as a young girl and later as a young religious felt powerfully drawn to human friendship. She was highly talented in the art of conversation. But she experienced as well that so much of her conversation, weighty or frivolous, was enervating to the life of the Spirit. "For more than eighteen of the twenty-eight years since I began prayer, I suffered this battle and conflict between friendship with God and friendship with the world" (ch. 8, 3). Feeling powerless in her struggle (for it is necessary that "we see by experience our own worthlessness so that what happened to Lucifer will not happen to us" [ch. 11, 11]), she one day, while praying in solitude

to her God for light about some friendships to which she was attached, experienced her first rapture in which she heard the words: "No longer do I want you to converse with men but with angels." The words were efficacious. "I have never again been able to tie myself to any friendship or to find consolation in or bear particular love for any other persons than those I understand love Him and strive to serve Him" (ch. 24, 5-6). Her unusual capacity for friendship was lifted up and transformed. Prayer is an actuation of the theological virtues; charity is friendship of human beings with God. The friendship is intensified through the growth simultaneously of charity and prayer, a growth coinciding with the four ways of watering the garden, the four degrees of prayer, or ways of receiving the inflow of grace.

The dimensions of this development can be grasped by observing the first and last degree. At the outset the prayer begins with an ascetical effort at personal communion with God, either by means of the tedious and often dry exercise of discursive meditation or by patient repetition of vocal prayer—in both cases always making the effort to keep Christ present. These initial efforts reach their culmination in the higher mystical graces, with locutions, visions, and union, when the divine Friend removes some of the veils and reveals His presence.

With the support of these graces, she is ready to discuss another important topic: the sanctifying power of the mystical favors. While writing her *Life* she is undergoing herself a transfiguration in the depths of her being. Still not clearly aware of what the outcome will hold, she knows with strong conviction that this kind of grace bears with it an incomparable efficacy. Human efforts of the other kind, even though intense and forceful, lie on a more superficial plane, remaining weaker in their effect. Long years of painful efforts and tenacious struggle do not reach into the deep caverns of energy and power as does a brief experience of these supernatural graces. In speaking of mystical understanding she concludes: "...one of these favors is enough to change a soul completely" (ch. 27, 9).

Her mission is the mystical life. She protests against those who belittle its graces or, on the other hand, those who think these

graces can be evoked through subtle techniques, that the toad can fly of itself whenever it wants (ch. 23, 13). No. In regard to the mystical graces one's whole task consists in accepting the cross of dryness with courage and humility and the freedom of spirit that comes with detachment from consolation; it consists in persevering prayer so as to open to receive what God gives: first the little spark, which in turn will enkindle the large fire. "I say only that prayer is the door to favors as great as those He granted me. If this door is closed, I don't know how He will grant them" (ch. 8, 9). And so she goes on — underscoring her basic message, that the favors of the mystical life have an incomparable value. "Let us not cease to believe that even in this life God gives the hundredfold" (ch. 22, 15).

History of the Autograph

Though the *Life* was written for her confessors, Teresa wasn't completely content with the approval they gave of her spirit. There was still another whose opinion she couldn't rest without; that was St. John of Avila, the apostle of Andalusia, then considered the most qualified person in Spain to judge spiritual matters. In 1568, after no little difficulty, Teresa was able to get the manuscript delivered to him. After studying it, he returned it to its author with a letter of approbation and praise dated September 12, 1568.

In 1570 she brought her account with her to Salamanca and let some of her confessors there read it: two Jesuits, Martín Gutiérrez and Jerónimo Ripalda, and two Dominicans, Bartolomé de Medina (who at one time had been highly critical of Teresa but later changed into one of her strong supporters) and Pédro de Herrero. As word spread concerning the secret manuscript, Teresa was urged by certain persons from whom she had received many favors to allow some copies to be made — by the Duchess of Alba and the Bishop of Avila, for example.

When the capricious and wealthy princess of Eboli, through whose benefactions Teresa was able to found two Carmels at Pastrana, heard news of the secret work, she insisted so emphatically on reading it that Teresa was forced to yield. The

princess made no effort to keep the manuscript out of the hands of the servants, and soon this intimate, deeply spiritual account became a subject of gossip and ridicule throughout the entire household by people who were completely out of their depth. After her husband's death the domineering princess, with much fanfare, expressed her grief by entering the Carmel of Pastrana to become a nun. She caused so much disturbance to the quiet contemplative life of the community that the nuns had to abandon the monastery there for Segovia. This was a blow to the princess's self-love. She settled the score by denouncing Teresa's *Life* to the Inquisition as the work of a heretical, illuminist nun, and as being all about visions, revelations and dangerous doctrines. Without delay the Inquisition began its inquiry. A letter was sent on January 2, 1575 to Don Alvaro de Mendoza, Bishop of Avila, ordering him to give over the book he had by Teresa of Jesus. Fortunately the Inquisition let the manuscript fall into good hands. It was Fr. Báñez, one of Teresa's confessors, who was appointed censor. His judgment of the book contained a matter-of-fact statement of approval: "Although this woman . . . is mistaken in some matters, at least she does not intend to lead others into error, for she speaks so frankly of good and bad, and with such desire to be correct in what she says, that one cannot doubt her good intention."

The autograph, however, was not returned but kept in the secret archives until 1588, after Teresa's death. At this time, Mother Ana de Jesús, then prioress of Madrid—one of Teresa's most noted and talented daughters, for whom St. John of the Cross wrote his commentary on the Spiritual Cantic, and who had influential friends at the royal court—managed to obtain the manuscript from the Inquisition in view of the printed edition of Teresa's works being prepared by the scholarly Augustinian friar, Luis de León. King Philip II later obtained the autograph for his own royal library of the Escorial where it is still preserved. It was placed beside works of two doctors of the Church, St. John Chrysostom and St. Augustine, almost as if to predict that Teresa herself, even though a woman, would one day be declared a doctor of the Church. This she was by Paul VI on September 27, 1970.

Teresa's writings have been continuously popular throughout the world since the time of their first printing, and have been translated into twenty-one languages. With regard to the *Life*, it was the first of the saint's works to attract translators. As early as 1611 an English translation of the *Life* by a W. M. was published in Antwerp. These were the initials of William Malone, a Jesuit persecuted and in exile from Ireland. In this century the most widely circulated English translation of Teresa's writings has been that done by the British scholar and authority on the Spanish mystics, E. Allison Peers. His translation was from Fr. Silverio's edition.

A New Translation

Unlike other Spanish classic authors, Teresa had no training as a writer. Her style is thoroughly spontaneous, without the slightest trace of artificiality or sophistication. Writing the way she talked, she reflects the popular language of the Castilian people of her time: natural, direct, colorful, and incisive. As though her thoughts were jostling with each other for position, her sentences often become highly involved with parentheses and digressions, causing her sometimes to lose the thread—which never prevents her from leaping forward quickly and easily to a new thought. Within her sentences she bothers little about preserving the agreement between the parts of speech required for the sake of clarity; she shifts back and forth from singular to plural, from first person to third, from past to present, and so on. Translating Teresa's sentences is often like working on puzzles, and some of the puzzles we can never be completely sure that we have solved. But by and large her meaning can be determined with certitude from the context. There are, finally, numerous instances of cacophony (*ya yo me temia a mí* [ch. 3, 7]); or of the use of semitisms (*estaba enferma de grandisima enfermedad* [ch. 5, 2]); of redundant or excessive uses of superlatives (*muy honesto en gran manera* [ch. 1, 1]); or of the use of multiple verbs (*dejé de holgarne de oirlo* [ch. 3, 1]).

In spite of the grammatical or stylistic shortcomings there is something about the color, spontaneity, and simplicity of Teresa's

style that makes her a delight to read. There is also a subtle wit frequently at work in what she says or in the way she says it. It is not an unusual sight to see Spaniards chuckling to themselves at the reading of Teresa of Avila in the original.

Those who had the privilege of observing her write have testified that she could do so as rapidly as any public notary, that she never paused to think or correct a word, or cross one out. She once said herself that she wished she could write with both hands so that all the ideas pouring into her head could be got on paper. She doesn't punctuate, and the paragraph divisions are few.

This is the first volume of a projected new English translation of St. Teresa's writings. One of the objectives of the Institute of Carmelite Studies in the United States is to provide new translations of the classic writings of the Carmelite saints. As a result it will be possible for the Institute to keep the works of these Carmelites in print in their entirety and always available to the American public, updating them when necessary. We are also taking full advantage of new findings and of all that recent scholarship has contributed to a better understanding of Teresa and her writings.

In this new translation we have striven above all for fidelity to Teresa's thought; in addition we have sought to capture something of her style, while at the same time rendering her in the language we use today. No purpose would have been served, however, in aiming after a type of literal fidelity that would even translate the shortcomings in Spanish grammar into shortcomings in English grammar. Compromise was our way out of many a difficulty as supposedly it is with most translators. We have tried to bring as much clarity and precision to our rendering as we could while at the same time preserving something of the peculiarities of the Teresian style.

Although no thorough critical text of Teresa's writings have yet been produced, we were fortunate in having for our use the edition prepared by Fr. Tomás de la Cruz (Alvarez) of the complete works of St. Teresa (Burgos: Edit. *El Monte Carmelo*, 1971). His punctuation of the text and ample supply of footnotes were an important aid to us in a number of obscure passages. Many

of our own notes, with his gracious consent, are based on, or taken word for word, from those in his Spanish edition. For further accuracy we have made use of the new editions prepared by Frs. Efrén and Steggink (Madrid: B.A.C., 1967); Fr. Isidoro (Madrid: *Edit. de Espiritualidad*, 1963) and Fr. Enrique Llamas (Madrid: *Edit. de Espiritualidad*, 1971). For a Teresian bibliography by English authors or of works translated into English see Sebastian Ramge, *An Introduction to the Writings of St. Teresa* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1963), pp. 124-135. For ongoing Teresian bibliography see *Archivum Bibliographicum Carmelitanum* (Rome: Teresianum, 1956-) and also *Bibliographia Internationalis Spiritualitatis* (Rome: Teresianum, 1969-).

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The introductions by Tomás Alvarez in his Spanish edition of the works of St. Teresa as well as many pages of research gathered by my colleague Otilio Rodriguez were especially helpful to me in preparing the introductions for this volume. I am grateful to these two Teresian scholars and also to some other persons in particular who have labored to make this book possible: Adrian J. Cooney for his careful reading of a good portion of the manuscript and his many valued suggestions about the English rendering; Joseph Crawford for his editorial work; Sr. Josephine for the index; our typist Jean Mallon; and our printer Robert Rowe. Finally, I would like to thank those many others who by their constant encouragement helped us to reach this first stage of a long and so far to us thoroughly rewarding work.

For some important studies of various subjects covered in the above introduction concerning the Spain of Teresa's time see R. Trevor Davies, *The Golden Century of Spain 1501-1621*, Harper Torchbooks (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1937); J. H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain 1469-1716*, A Mentor Book (New York: The New American Library, 1966); Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition* (New York: The New American Library, 1965); P. Tommaso della Croce, "*Santa Teresa e i movimenti spirituali del suo tem-*

po," *Collana Fiamma Viva*, vol. 4 (Rome: Teresianum, 1963), pp. 9-54; *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, s.v. "*Espagne: l'Âge d'ôr*," by Adolfo de la M. de Dios; and *Ibid.*, s.v. "*Illuminisme*," by Eulogio de la Virgen del Carmen.

K.K.

The Flaming Heart

(Upon the book and picture of the seraphical St. Teresa)

O thou undaunted daughter of desires!
By all thy dower of lights and fires;
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;
By all thy lives and deaths of love;
By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;
By all thy brim-filled bowls of fierce desire,
And by thy last morning's draughts of liquid fire;
By the full kingdom of that final kiss
That seized thy parting soul, and sealed thee His;
By all the heavens thou hast in Him
(Fair sister of the Seraphim);
By all of Him we have in Thee;
Leave nothing of my Self in me.
Let me so read thy life, that I
Unto all life of mine may die.

Richard Crashaw, d. 1649

JHS

Prologue

1. Since my confessors commanded me and gave me plenty of leeway to write about the favors and the kind of prayer the Lord has granted me, I wish they would also have allowed me to tell very clearly and minutely about my great sins and wretched life. This would be a consolation. But they didn't want me to. In fact I was very much restricted in those matters.¹ And so I ask, for the love of God, whoever reads this account to bear in mind that my life has been so wretched that I have not found a saint among those who were converted to God in whom I can find comfort. For I note that after the Lord called them, they did not turn back and offend Him. As for me, not only did I turn back and become worse, but it seems I made a study out of resisting the favors His Majesty was granting me. I was like someone who sees that she is obliged to serve more, yet understands that she can't pay the smallest part of her debt.

2. May God be blessed forever, He who waited for me so long! I beseech Him with all my heart to give me the grace to present with complete clarity and truthfulness this account of my life which my confessors ordered me to write. And I know, too, that even the Lord has for some time wanted me to do this, although I have not dared. May this account render Him glory and praise. And from now on may my confessors knowing me better through this narration help me in my weakness to give the Lord something of the service I owe Him, whom all things praise forever. Amen.

Chapter 1

Treats of how the Lord began to awaken this soul to virtue in her childhood and of how helpful it is in this matter that parents also be virtuous.

TO HAVE HAD VIRTUOUS and God-fearing parents¹ along with the graces the Lord granted me should have been enough for me to have led a good life, if I had not been so wretched. My father was fond of reading good books, and thus he also had books in Spanish for his children to read. These good books together with the care my mother took to have us pray and be devoted to our Lady and to some of the saints began to awaken me when, I think, six or seven years old, to the practice of virtue. It was a help to me to see that my parents favored nothing but virtue. And they themselves possessed many.

My father was a man very charitable with the poor and compassionate toward the sick, and even toward servants. So great was his compassion that nobody was ever able to convince him to accept slaves.² And his pity for them was such that once having in his home a slave owned by his brother, he treated her as though she were one of his children. He used to say that out of pity he couldn't bear seeing her held captive. He was very honest. No one ever saw him swear or engage in fault-finding. He was an upright man.

2. My mother also had many virtues. And she suffered much sickness during her life. She was extremely modest. Although very beautiful, she never gave occasion to anyone to think she paid any attention to her beauty. For at the time of her death at the age of thirty-three, her clothes were already those of a much older person. She was gentle and very intelligent. Great were the trials she suffered during her life. Her death was a tru-

ly Christian one.

3. We were in all three sisters and nine brothers.³ All resembled their parents in being virtuous, through the goodness of God, with the exception of myself—although I was the most loved of my father. And it seemed he was right—before I began to offend God. For I am ashamed when I recall the good inclinations the Lord gave me and how poorly I knew how to profit by them.

4. My brothers and sisters did not in any way hold me back from the service of God. I had one brother about my age.⁴ We used to get together to read the lives of the saints. (He was the one I liked most, although I had great love for them all and they for me.) When I considered the martyrdoms the saints suffered for God, it seemed to me that the price they paid for going to enjoy God was very cheap, and I greatly desired to die in the same way. I did not want this on account of the love I felt for God but to get to enjoy very quickly the wonderful things I read there were in heaven. And my brother and I discussed together the means we should take to achieve this. We agreed to go off to the land of the Moors and beg them, out of love of God, to cut off our heads there. It seemed to me the Lord had given us courage at so tender an age, but we couldn't discover any means. Having parents seemed to us the greatest obstacle. We were terrified in what we read about the suffering and the glory that was to last forever. We spent a lot of time talking about this and took delight in often repeating: forever and ever and ever. As I said this over and over, the Lord was pleased to impress upon me in childhood the way of truth.

5. When I saw it was impossible to go where I would be killed for God, we made plans to be hermits. And in a garden that we had in our house, we tried as we could to make hermitages piling up some little stones which afterward would quickly fall down again. And so in nothing could we find a remedy for our desire. It gives me devotion now to see how God gave me so early what I lost through my own fault.

6. I gave what alms I could, but that was little. I sought out solitude to pray my devotions, and they were many, especially the rosary, to which my mother was very devoted; and she made

us devoted to it too. When I played with other girls I enjoyed it when we pretended we were nuns in a monastery, and it seemed to me that I desired to be one, although not as much as I desired the other things I mentioned.

7. I remember that when my mother died I was twelve years old or a little less.⁵ When I began to understand what I had lost, I went, afflicted, before an image of our Lady and besought her with many tears to be my mother.⁶ It seems to me that although I did this in simplicity it helped me. For I have found favor with this sovereign Virgin in everything I have asked of her, and in the end she has drawn me to herself. It wearies me now to see and think that I was not constant in the good desires I had in my childhood.

8. O my Lord, since it seems You have determined to save me, I beseech Your Majesty that it may be so. And since You have granted me as many favors as You have, don't You think it would be good (not for my gain but for Your honor) if the inn where You have so continually to dwell were not to get so dirty? It wearies me, Lord, even to say this, for I know that the whole fault was mine. It doesn't seem to me that there was anything more for You to do in order that from this age I would be all Yours. If I start to complain about my parents, I am not able to do so, for I saw nothing but good in them and solicitude for my own good.

As I grew older, when I began to know of the natural attractive qualities the Lord had bestowed on me (which others said were many), instead of thanking Him for them, I began to make use of them all to offend Him, as I shall now tell.

Chapter 2

Treats of how she lost these virtues and of how important it is in childhood to associate with virtuous people.

WHAT I AM GOING TO TELL ABOUT began, it seems to me, to do me much harm. I sometimes reflect on the great damage parents do by not striving that their children might

always see virtuous deeds of every kind. For even though my mother, as I said,¹ was so virtuous, I did not, in reaching the age of reason, imitate her good qualities; in fact hardly at all. And the bad ones did me much harm. She loved books of chivalry.² But this pastime didn't hurt her the way it did me, for she did not fail to do her duties; and we used to read them together in our free time. Perhaps she did this reading to escape thinking of the great trials she had to bear and to busy her children with something so that they would not turn to other things dangerous to them. Our reading such books was a matter that weighed so much upon my father that we had to be cautioned lest he see us. I began to get the habit of reading these books. And by that little fault, which I saw in my mother, I started to grow cold in my desires and to fail in everything else. I didn't think it was wrong to waste many hours of the day and night in such a useless practice, even though hidden from my father. I was so completely taken up with this reading that I didn't think I could be happy if I didn't have a new book.

2. I began to dress in finery and to desire to please and look pretty, taking great care of my hands and hair and about perfumes and all the empty things in which one can indulge, and which were many, for I was very vain. I had no bad intentions since I would not have wanted anyone to offend God on my account. For many years I took excessive pains about cleanliness and other things that did not seem in any way sinful. Now I see how wrong it must have been.

I had some first cousins³ who often came to our house, though my father was very cautious and would not allow others to do so; please God he had been inspired to do likewise with my cousins. For now I realize what a danger it is at an age when one should begin to cultivate the virtues to associate with people who do not know the vanity of the world but rather are just getting ready to throw themselves into it. They were about my age—a little older than I—and we always went about together. They liked me very much, and I engaged in conversations with them about all the things that pleased them. I listened to accounts of their affections and of childish things not the least bit edifying; and, what was worse, I exposed my soul to that which

caused all its harm.

3. If I should have to give advice, I would tell parents that when their children are this age they ought to be very careful about whom their children associate with. For here lies the root of great evil since our natural bent is toward the worst rather than toward the best.

So it happened to me. For I had a sister⁴ much older than I whose modesty and goodness (of which she had a great deal) I did not imitate at all; and I imitated all that was harmful in a relative who spent a lot of time at our house. She was so frivolous that my mother tried very hard to keep her from coming to our home. It seems my mother foresaw the harm that would be done to me on account of her, but there were so many occasions for her to come to the house that my mother could not prevent it. This relative was the one I liked to associate with. My talks and conversations were with her, for she encouraged me in all the pastimes I desired and even immersed me in them by sharing with me her conversations and vanities. Until I began to associate with her when I was fourteen, or I think older (I mean when she took me for her friend and confidante), I don't think I would have abandoned God by a mortal sin or lost the fear of God, although the fear of losing my honor was stronger in me. This sense of honor gave me the strength not to completely lose my reputation. Nor do I think anything in the world could have made me change my mind in that regard. Neither do I think the love of anyone could have made me give in. Would that I had had the fortitude not to do anything against the honor of God just as my natural bent gave me fortitude not to lose anything of what I thought belonged to the honor of the world. And I did not see that I was losing it in many other ways.

4. I was extreme in my vain desire for my reputation, but the means necessary to preserve it I didn't take; although I was very circumspect so as not to lose it entirely.

This friendship pained my father and sister. They often reproached me for it. Since they couldn't do away with the occasion for her coming to our home, their careful efforts were useless, for I was strikingly shrewd when it came to mischief. It frightens me sometimes to think of the harm a bad companion can do,

and if I hadn't experienced it I wouldn't believe it. Especially during adolescence the harm done must be greater. I should like parents to learn from my experience to be very watchful in this matter. And indeed this conversation so changed me that hardly any virtue remained to my naturally virtuous soul. And I think she and another girl friend of the same type impressed their own traits upon me.

5. From such experience I understand the great profit that comes from good companionship. And I am certain that if at that age I had gone around with virtuous persons, I would have remained whole in virtue. For should I have had when that age someone to teach me to fear God, my soul would have gained strength not to fall. Afterward, having lost this fear of God completely, I only had the fear of losing my reputation, and such fear brought me torment in everything I did. With the thought that my deeds would not be known, I dared to do many things truly against my honor and against God.

6. These things did me harm, I think, at the beginning, and it wasn't her fault but mine. For afterward my malice was sufficient, together with having the maids around, for in them I found a helping hand for every kind of wrong. If there had been one of them to give me good counsel, I perhaps would have benefited by it; but self-interest blinded them as my vanity did me. I was never inclined to great evil—for I naturally abhorred indecent things—but to the pastime of pleasant conversation; yet, placed in the occasion, the danger was at hand, and my father's and brothers' reputation was in jeopardy as well. From all these occasions and dangers God delivered me in such a way that it seems clear He strove, against my will, to keep me from being completely lost, although this deliverance could not be achieved so secretly as to prevent me from suffering much loss of reputation and my father from being without suspicion. For it doesn't seem to me that three months, during which I engaged in these vanities, had gone by when my father brought me to a convent in that place where they educated persons like myself,¹ although not with habits as bad as mine. This was done so cautiously that only I and some relatives knew about it because they waited for an opportunity when it would not seem surpris-

ing for me to go to the convent school; that is, once my sister was married^b it seemed no longer good for me to stay at home without a mother.

7. So excessive was the love my father bore me and so great my dissimulation that he was unable to believe there was much wrong with me, and so he was not angered with me. Since this period of time had been brief, and though he knew something, nothing could be said with certainty. For since I feared so much for my honor, I used every effort to keep my actions secret, and I never considered that one can never do this with Him who sees all things. O my God! What harm is done in the world by considering our actions of only little importance and by thinking something can be done against You in secret! I am certain that great evils would be avoided if we were to understand that the whole matter lies not in our guarding ourselves against men but in our guarding ourselves against displeasing You.

8. The first eight days I felt very unhappy because of my being in that convent school, and more than that because of my suspicion that they knew about my vanity. For already I was wearied and did not fail to have great fear of God when I offended Him, trying to go to confession at once. Although at the beginning I was very unhappy, within eight days—and I think even less—I was much more content than when in my father's house. All were very pleased with me, for the Lord gave me the grace to be pleasing wherever I went, and so I was much loved. And although at that time I was strongly against my becoming a nun, it made me happy to see such good nuns, for there were many good ones in that house, very modest, religious and circumspect. Nonetheless, in spite of all, the devil didn't let up tempting me, through some outsiders who continued to send me messages. But since the opportunities were few, these persons stopped sending them. My soul began to return to the good habits of early childhood, and I saw the great favor God accords to anyone placed with good companions. It seems to me that His Majesty was considering and reconsidering in what way He could bring me back to Himself. May You be blessed, Lord, who put up with me so long! Amen.

9. One thing, it seems, that could have amounted to some

excuse for me, should I not have had so many faults, was that the friendship with one of my cousins was in view of a possible marriage; and having inquired of my confessor and other persons about many things, I was told I was doing nothing against God.

10. There was a nun⁷ there in care of the dormitory for all of us who were lay persons. It was by means of her it seems that the Lord wished to begin to give me light, as I shall now tell.

Chapter 3

Treats of how good companionship played a part in the awakening once again of her good desires and how the Lord began to give her some light on the mistake she had been making.

BEGINNING, THEN, TO LIKE the good and holy conversation of this nun, I was glad to hear how well she spoke about God, for she was very discreet and saintly. There was no time it seems to me when I was not happy to hear about God. She began to tell me how she arrived at the decision to become a nun solely by reading what the Gospel says: *many are the called and few the chosen*.¹ She told me about the reward the Lord grants those who give up all for Him. This good company began to help me get rid of the habits that the bad company had caused and to turn my mind to the desire for eternal things and for some freedom from the antagonism that I felt strongly within myself toward becoming a nun. And if I saw someone with the gift of tears when she prayed, or other virtues, I greatly envied her. For so hard was my heart that I could read the entire Passion without shedding a tear. This pained me.

2. After a year and a half in the convent school I was much better. I began to recite many vocal prayers and to seek that all commend me to God so that He might show me the state in which I was to serve Him. But still I had no desire to be a nun, and I asked God not to give me this vocation; although I also feared marriage.

By the end of this period of time in which I stayed there I

was more favorable to the thought of being a nun, although not in that house, for there were things I was afterward to understand were most virtuous that seemed to me to be too extreme. And some of the youngest of the nuns contributed to my thinking this, for if all of them had been of one mind I would have greatly profited. Also, I had a good friend in another convent,² and that was the reason why if I were to become a nun I would not have done so unless it were in the convent where she was. I looked more to pleasing my sensuality and vanity than to what was good for my soul. These good thoughts about being a nun sometimes came to me, and then would go away; and I could not be persuaded to be one.

3. During this time, although I did not neglect my spiritual improvement, the Lord was more determined to prepare me for the state that was better for me. He sent me a serious illness so that I had to return to my father's house. When I got better, they brought me to visit my sister, who lived in a nearby hamlet,³ for she loved me so deeply that if they had followed her wish I would have lived permanently with her. And her husband also liked me very much — at least he was very solicitous for my comfort. But even this I owe to the Lord, for everywhere I was always loved; and yet, I always served Him very poorly.

4. There lived along the way one of my father's brothers,⁴ a widower, very prudent and virtuous whom the Lord was also preparing for Himself. For in his old age he left all that he had and became a friar and died, with the result, I believe, that he enjoys God. He desired that I stay with him for a few days. He spent his time reading good books in the vernacular, and his talk was — most often — about God and the vanity of the world. He asked me to read these books to him; and, although I did not like them, I pretended to. For in this matter of pleasing others I went to extremes, even when it was a burden to me; so much so that what in others would be considered virtuous, in me was a great fault, for I very often acted without discretion.

Oh, God help me! What means His Majesty was employing to prepare me for the state in which He desired to make use of me! For without my desiring it, He forced me to overcome my repugnance. May He be blessed forever. Amen.

5. Although the days I remained there were few, because of the good company and the strength the words of God—both heard and read—gave my heart, I began to understand the truth I knew in childhood (the nothingness of all things, the vanity of the world, and how it would soon come to an end)⁵ and to fear that if I were to die I would go to hell. And although my will did not completely incline to being a nun, I saw that the religious life was the best and safest state, and so little by little I decided to force myself to accept it.

6. I was engaged in this battle within myself for three months, forcing myself with this reasoning: that the trials and hardships of being a nun could not be greater than those of purgatory and that I had really merited hell; that it would not be so great a thing while alive to live as though in purgatory; and that afterward I would go directly to heaven, for that was my desire.

And in this business of choosing a state, it seems to me I was moved more by servile fear than by love. The devil was suggesting that I would not be able to suffer the trials of religious life because I was too pampered. I resisted this with the thought of the trials Christ suffered and that it would be no great thing if I suffered some for Him; and that He would help me to bear them—I ought to have had this last thought, I don't remember if I did. I suffered very many temptations those days.

7. At that time I had, together with a high fever, great fainting spells; for I always had poor health. My fondness for good books was my salvation. Reading the *Letters of St. Jerome*⁶ so encouraged me that I decided to tell my father about my decision to take the habit, for I was so persistent in points of honor that I don't think I would have turned back for anything once I told him. So great was his love for me that in no way was I able to obtain his permission or achieve anything through persons I asked to intercede for me. The most we could get from him was that after his death I could do whatever I wanted. I was afraid of myself and my frailty and of backing down; and since I could not wait so long, I tried to do it by another way, as I shall now tell.

Chapter 4

Tells how she was helped by the Lord to force herself to take the habit and of the many illnesses His Majesty began to send her.

IN THOSE DAYS while I was making these decisions, I persuaded one of my brothers to become a friar,¹ telling him about the vanity of the world. We both agreed to go one morning very early to the convent where that friend of mine was, which was the convent I liked very much.² For in this final decision I was determined to go where I thought I could serve God more, or where my father desired. For I was already thinking more of a remedy for my soul than of any easy way of life for myself.

I remember, clearly and truly, that when I left my father's house I felt that separation so keenly that the feeling will not be greater, I think, when I die. For it seemed that every bone in my body was being sundered. Since there was no love of God to take away my love for my father and relatives, everything so constrained me that if the Lord hadn't helped me, my reflections would not have been enough for me to continue on. In this situation He gave me such courage against myself that I carried out the task.

2. As soon as I took the habit,³ the Lord gave me an understanding of how He favors those who use force with themselves to serve Him. No one noticed this struggle, but rather they thought that I was very pleased. Within an hour, He gave me such great happiness at being in the religious state of life that it never left me up to this day, and God changed the dryness my soul experienced into the greatest tenderness. All the things of religious life delighted me, and it is true that sometimes while sweeping, during the hours I used to spend in self-indulgence and self-adornment, I realized that I was free of all that and experienced a new joy which amazed me. And I could not understand where it came from.

When I recall this, there is no task that could be presented to me, no matter how hard, that I would hesitate to undertake. For I have already experienced in many ways that if I strive at the outset with determination to do it, even in this life His Ma-

jesty pays the soul in such ways that only the one who has this joy understands it. Yet, since the task is for God alone, He may desire that the soul feel this fear before beginning so that it gain more merit. And the greater the fear it starts out with, the greater and more enjoyable will be the reward afterward. I hold this opinion through experience, as I said, with many very difficult things. And so I would never counsel anyone—if there were someone to whom I should have to give counsel—to fail out of fear to put a good inspiration into practice when it repeatedly arises. For if one proceeds with detachment for God alone, there is no reason to fear that the effort will turn out bad; for God has the power to accomplish all. May He be blessed forever, amen.

3. Enough already, O my supreme Good and Repose, are the favors You have bestowed on me in bringing me by Your mercy and greatness through so many roundabout ways to so secure a state and to a house where there are many servants of God I might imitate so as to go on increasing in Your service! I don't know how I am going to continue here when I remember the kind of profession I made⁴ and the great resolve and happiness with which I made it and the espousal that I entered into with You. I cannot speak of this without tears; and were they tears of blood and were they to break my heart, the sentiment would not make up for the way I offended You afterward.

It seems to me now I was right in not wanting so great a dignity since I was going to make such bad use of it. But You, my Lord, desired to be the offended one—for almost twenty years, in which I used this favor badly—so that I might become better. It seems, my God, that I did nothing but promise not to keep a thing of what I promised You; although that was not then my intention. But I see that afterward my deeds were such (for I don't know what intention I had) that it may be more clearly seen who You are, my Spouse, and who I am. For it is true, certainly, that many times the feeling of my great faults is tempered by the happiness experienced in the thought that the multitude of Your mercies may be known.

4. In whom, Lord, can your mercies shine as they do in me who have so darkened with my evil deeds the wonderful favors

You began to grant me? Woe is me, my Creator, for if I desire to make an excuse, I find none! Nor is anyone to be blamed but myself. For if I would have paid back something of the love You began to show me, I should not have been able to employ it in anyone but You; and with that all would have been remedied. Since I did not merit this or have such good fortune, may Your mercy, Lord, help me now.

5. The change in food and life-style did injury to my health; and although my happiness was great, this was not enough. My fainting spells began to increase, and I experienced such heart pains that this frightened any who witnessed them; and there were many other illnesses all together. And so I passed the first year with very poor health, although I don't think I offended God much in that year. Since the sickness was so serious that I always nearly lost consciousness, and sometimes lost it completely, my father was painstaking in looking for a remedy. Since the doctors there had none to offer, he sought to bring me to a place very famous for the cure of other sicknesses;⁵ and also mine they thought could be cured. This friend I mentioned who was in the convent accompanied me, for she was an older person.⁶ In the convent where I was a nun, there was no vow of enclosure.

6. I remained in that place almost a year, and for three of those months suffering such severe torment from the harsh cures they used on me that I don't know how I was able to endure them. And, finally, even though I endured them, my bodily make-up could not, as I shall tell.⁷ The cure was supposed to begin at the beginning of the summer, and I went at the beginning of the winter. During that interval I stayed, waiting for the month of April, at my sister's house, which I mentioned,⁸ which was in a hamlet nearby; and I didn't have to be coming and going.

7. When I was on the way, that uncle of mine I mentioned⁹ who lived along the road gave me a book. It is called *The Third Spiritual Alphabet*¹⁰ and endeavors to teach the prayer of recollection. And although during this first year I read good books (for I no longer desired to make use of the others, because I understood the harm they did me), I did not know how to pro-

ceed in prayer or how to be recollected. And so I was very happy with this book and resolved to follow that path¹¹ with all my strength. Since the Lord had already given me the gift of tears and I enjoyed reading, I began to take time out for solitude, to confess frequently, and to follow that path, taking the book for my master. For during the twenty years after this period of which I am speaking, I did not find a master, I mean a confessor, who understood me, even though I looked for one. This hurt me so much that I often turned back and was even completely lost, for a master would have helped me flee from the occasions of offending God.

His Majesty began to grant me many favors during these early stages. I was almost nine months in this solitude, although not so free from offending God as the book told me I should be; but I could not be that free, for it seemed to me almost impossible to be so on guard. I kept from committing mortal sin and begged God to keep me so always. As for venial sins, I paid little attention; and that is what destroyed me. At the end of this time that I mentioned there, the Lord, as I was saying, began to favor me by means of this path; so much so that He granted me the prayer of quiet. And sometimes I arrived at union, although I did not understand what the one was or the other, or how much they were to be prized—for I believe it would have done me great good to have understood this. True, this union lasted for so short a time that I do not know if it continued for the space of a Hail Mary. But I was left with some effects so great that, even though at this time I was no more than twenty,¹² it seems I trampled the world under foot. And so I pitied those who went following after it, even though in permissible things.

I tried as hard as I could to keep Jesus Christ, our God and our Lord, present within me, and that was my way of prayer. If I reflected upon some phrase of His Passion, I represented Him to myself interiorly. But most of the time I spent reading good books, which was my whole recreation. For God didn't give me talent for discursive thought or for a profitable use of the imagination. In fact, my imagination is so dull that I never succeeded even to think about and represent in my mind—as hard

as I tried—the humanity of the Lord. And although, if one perseveres, one reaches contemplation more quickly along this way of inability to work discursively with the intellect, this way is nonetheless most laborious and painful. For if the will is not occupied and love has nothing present with which to be engaged, the soul is left as though without support or exercise, and the solitude and dryness is very troublesome, and the battle with one's thoughts extraordinary.

8. It is fitting for persons with this tendency to have greater purity of conscience than those who can work with the intellect. For anyone, who reflects discursively on what the world is, and what one owes God, and how much God suffered, and on how little one serves Him, and what God gives to anyone who loves Him, deduces doctrine to defend oneself from thoughts, occasions, and dangers. But anyone who cannot benefit from such a practice will derive more profit from spending a good deal of time in reading; and this is necessary since by oneself one cannot get any idea. Discursive reflection is so very arduous for such persons that if the master insists that they spend a lot of time in prayer without the help of reading, I say that it will be impossible for them to continue for long; and they will do harm to their health if they persist, for discursive reflection is an extremely difficult thing to practice. Reading is very helpful for recollection and serves as a necessary substitute—even though little may be read—for anyone who is unable to practice mental prayer.

9. Now it seems to me that it was the Lord's providence that I not find anyone to instruct me, for, on account of my being unable as I say to reflect discursively, it would have been impossible, I think, to have persevered for the eighteen years I suffered this trial, and in that great dryness. In all those years, except for the time after Communion, I never dared to begin prayer without a book. For my soul was as fearful of being without it during prayer as it would have been should it have had to battle with a lot of people. With this recourse, which was like a partner or a shield by which to sustain the blows of my many thoughts, I went about consoled. For the dryness was not usually felt, but it was always felt when I was without a book. Then

my soul was thrown into confusion and my thoughts ran wild. With a book I began to collect them, and my soul was drawn to recollection. And many times just opening the book was enough; at other times I read a little, and at others a great deal, according to the favor the Lord granted me.

It seemed to me at this initial stage I am speaking of that by having books and the opportunity for solitude there could have been no danger capable of drawing me away from so much good. And I think that with God's help it would have been so if I had had a master or person who would have counseled me about fleeing occasions at the beginning and made me turn away quickly when coming upon them. And if the devil would have attacked me openly at that time, I think I would by no means have returned to serious sin. But he was so crafty and I so wretched that all my resolutions profited me little; although the days in which I served the Lord profited me a great deal so that I was able to suffer the terrible illnesses I had with the extraordinary patience that His Majesty gave me.

10. I often marvelled to think of the great goodness of God, and my soul delighted in seeing His amazing magnificence and mercy. May He be blessed by all, for I have seen clearly that He does not fail to repay, even in his life, every good desire. As miserable and imperfect as my deeds were, this Lord of mine improved and perfected them and gave them value, and the evils and sins He then hid. His Majesty even permitted that the eyes of those who saw these sins be blinded, and He removed these sins from their memory. He gilds my faults; the Lord makes a virtue shine that He himself places in me—almost forcing me to have it.

11. I want to return to what they ordered me to write about. I say that if I were to have to tell in detail about the way the Lord dealt with me in these early stages, an intellect other than mine would be necessary to give enough force to the expression of what I owe Him for these graces and of my terrible ingratitude and wickedness since I forgot about all of them. May He be forever blessed who put up with me for so long. Amen.

Chapter 5

Continues to treat of her great illnesses, of the patience the Lord gave her, and of how He draws good out of evil, as is seen in something that happened to her in that place where she went for a cure.

IFORGOT TO TELL HOW in the novitiate year I suffered great uneasiness over things that in themselves were of little consequence. Often times I was accused about things without my being at fault. I bore this with a great deal of pain and imperfection; however, because of the deep happiness I felt in being a nun, all passed away. Since they saw me seek out solitude and saw me sometimes weep over my sins, they figured this was caused by discontent, and said so.

I was fond of everything about religious life, but I didn't like to suffer anything that seemed to be scorn. I enjoyed being esteemed. I was meticulous about everything I did. It all seemed to me virtue, although this will be no reason for pardon, because I knew in everything what seeking my own happiness was, and thus ignorance is no excuse. The only real excuse could be that the convent was not founded on a strict observance. I, miserable creature that I was, followed after what I saw wrong and left aside the good.

2. There was a nun at that time afflicted with the most serious and painful illness, because there were some holes in her abdomen which caused obstructions in such a way that she had to eject through them what she ate. She soon died from this. I observed that all feared that affliction. As for myself, I envied her patience. I asked God that, dealing with me in like manner, He would give me the illnesses by which He would be served. It seemed to me that I feared nothing, for I was so set on gaining eternal goods that I determined to gain them by any means whatever. And I am amazed because I had not yet in my opinion any love of God as I did afterward, it seems to me, when I began to practice prayer. But I had the light that made everything coming to an end seem of little value to me, and it made those goods that can be gained by the love of God seem of great value since they are eternal.

So well did His Majesty hear my prayer that within two years I was so sick that, although this sickness was not the same as the nun's, I don't think it was any less painful or laborious during the three year period that it lasted, as I shall now tell.

3. When the time came for the cure to begin, for I had been waiting at my sister's house, I was brought there¹ with much solicitude for my comfort by my father and sister, and my friend, the nun,² who had come with me, for she loved me very dearly. At this point the devil began to upset my soul, although God drew out very much good from this. There was a cleric of excellent intelligence and social status who lived in that place where I went to be cured. He was learned, although not greatly so. I began to confess to him, for I was always fond of learning. Half-learned confessors have done my soul great harm when I have been unable to find a confessor with as much learning as I like. I have come to see by experience that it is better, if they are virtuous and observant of holy customs, that they have little learning. For then they do not trust themselves without asking someone who knows, nor do I trust them; and a truly learned man has never misguided me. Those others certainly could not have wanted to mislead me, but they didn't know any better. I thought that they really knew and that I was obliged to no more than to believe them, especially since what they told me was liberal and permissive. If it had been rigid, I am so wretched that I would have sought out others. What was venial sin they said was no sin at all, and what was serious mortal sin they said was venial. This did me so much harm that it should not surprise anyone that I speak of it here in order to warn others against so great an evil. I see clearly that in God's eyes there is no excuse for me, for that the things by their nature were wrong should have been enough for me to have been on guard against them. It was on account of my sins, I believe, that God permitted these confessors to be mistaken themselves and to misguide me. And I misled many others by telling them what these confessors told me.

I went on in this blindness for I believe more than seventeen years until a Dominican Father, a very learned man,³ enlightened me about many things. And the Jesuit Fathers made

me fear everything so much, by showing me how wrong those theories were, as I shall tell later.

4. When I began then to confess with this cleric¹ I mentioned, it happened that he became extremely fond of me; for at that time even after I became a nun I had little to confess compared to what I had later on. His affection for me was not bad; but since it was too great, it came to no good. He had learned from me that I was determined not to do anything grave against God for any reason, and he also assured me of the same; and so we conversed a great deal. But I was so fascinated with God at that time that what pleased me most was to speak of the things of God. And since I was so young, it threw him into confusion to observe this; and by reason of the strong love he had for me, he began to explain to me about his bad moral state. This was no small matter, because for about seven years he had been living in a dangerous state on account of his affection and dealings with a woman in that same place; and, despite this, he was saying Mass. The association was so public that he had lost his honor and reputation, and no one dared to admonish him about this. To me it was a great pity for I loved him deeply. I was so frivolous and blind that it seemed to me a virtue to be grateful and loyal to anyone who loved me. Damned be such loyalty that goes against the law of God! This is the kind of nonsense that goes on in the world, which makes no sense to me: that we consider it a virtue not to break with a friendship, even if the latter go against God, whereas we are indebted to God for all the good that is done to us. Oh blindness of the world! You would have been served, Lord, if I had been most ungrateful to all that world and not the least bit ungrateful to You! But it has been just the reverse because of my sins.

5. I endeavored to get more information from other persons in his household. I learned more about his bad moral state and saw that the poor man was not so much at fault. For the unfortunate woman had put some charms in a little copper idol she asked him to wear around his neck out of love for her, and no one was influential enough to be able to take this away from him.

I do not believe with certainty that it is true that charms have this power. But I will mention this that I have seen so as to ad-

wise men to be on their guard with women who desire to carry on in this way. Men should believe that since these women have lost their shame before God (for women are obliged to modesty more than men), they can be trusted in nothing; for they will stop at nothing so as to hold on to this friendship and passion the devil has placed in them. Even though I have been so wretched, I have never fallen into anything of this sort, nor have I ever tried to do evil; nor, even if I could have, would I ever have desired to force anyone to love me, for the Lord has protected me from this. But if He should have let me, I would have done the evil that in everything else I did, for there is nothing trustworthy in me.

6. Once I knew about this charm, I began to show him more love. My intention was good; the deed bad. For in order to do good, no matter how great, one should not commit the slightest wrong. I used to speak with him very often about God. This must have profited him, although I rather believe that it prompted him to love me greatly. For in order to please me, he finally gave me the little idol, which I then threw in a river. Once he got rid of this, he began—like someone awaking from a deep sleep—to recall everything he had done during those years. And being frightened about himself and grieving over his bad moral state, he at last began to abhor the woman. Our Lady must have helped him greatly, for he was most devoted to her Immaculate Conception; and he celebrated this feast with great solemnity. Finally, he stopped seeing this woman entirely, and he never tired of thanking God for having given him light.

Exactly one year from the first day I met him, he died. He was very devoted to the service of God, for I never thought that the great affection he bore me was wrong, although it could have been more pure. But there were also occasions on which, if we had not remained very much in God's presence, there would have been more serious offenses. As I said,⁵ once I understood a thing to be a mortal sin, I then avoided it; and it seems that his observing this in me helped him to love me. For I believe that all men must be more friendly toward women who they see are inclined toward virtue. And this is the means whereby women ought to gain more of what they are seeking from men, as I shall

say later. I am certain that he is on the path of salvation. He died a very good death and completely detached from that occasion. It seems the Lord desired that by these means he would be saved.

7. With the severest afflictions, I spent three months in that place, for the cure was too harsh for my constitution. After two months, because of the potent medicines, my life was almost at an end. The severity of the heart pains, which I went to have cured, was more acute. For sometimes it seemed that sharp teeth were biting into me, so much so that it was feared I had rabies. With the continuous fever and the great lack of strength (for because of nausea I wasn't able to eat anything, only drink), I was so shrivelled and wasted away (because for almost a month they gave me a daily purge) that my nerves began to shrink causing such unbearable pains that I found no rest either by day or by night—a very deep sadness.

8. Seeing such poor results, my father brought me back to where doctors could come to see me. They all gave up hope for me, for they said that on top of all this sickness, I was also tubercular. I cared little about this diagnosis. The pains were what exhausted me, for they were like one continuous entity throughout my whole body, from head to foot. Pain of the nerves is unbearable, as doctors affirm, and since my nerves were all shrunken, certainly it was a bitter torment. How many merits could I have gained, were it not for my own fault!

I remained in this excruciating state no more than three months, for it seemed impossible to be able to suffer so many ills together. Now I am amazed; and I consider the patience His Majesty gave me a great favor from the Lord, for this patience was clearly seen to come from Him. It greatly profited me to have read the story of Job in St. Gregory's *Morals*.⁶ For it seems the Lord prepared me by this means, together with my having begun to experience prayer, so that I could be able to bear the suffering with so much conformity to His will. All my conversations were with Him. I kept these words of Job very habitually in my mind and recited them: *Since we receive good things from the hand of the Lord, why do we not suffer the evil things?*²⁷ This it seems gave me strength.

9. Then the feast of our Lady in August came. The torment had been going on since April, but it was worse during the latter three months. I hastened to go to confession, for I always liked to confess frequently. They thought I was afraid of dying, and so that I would not become troubled my father would not allow me to confess. Oh, love, too excessive, springing from flesh and blood; even though from so Catholic and prudent a father (for he was every bit of this, and his action did not arise from ignorance), it could have done me great harm! That night I suffered a paroxysm in which I remained for four days,⁸ or a little less, without any feeling. At this time they gave me the sacrament of the anointing of the sick, and from hour to hour or moment to moment they thought I was going to die; they did nothing but recite the Creed to me, as if I were able to understand them. At times they were so certain I was dead that afterward I even found the wax on my eyes.⁹

10. The sorrow my father felt for not having let me confess was great—many outcries and prayers to God. Blessed be He who desired to hear them! For after the grave in my convent was open for a day and a half awaiting arrival of the body, and the funeral rites were already celebrated at a monastery of our friars outside the city, the Lord allowed me to return to consciousness. Immediately I desired to confess. I received Communion with many tears, though it seems to me these tears were not caused by sorrow for having offended God, which would have been sufficient for salvation, but for the mistake I made on account of those who told me certain things were not mortal sins, which I afterward clearly saw were. The pains that remained were unsupportable—the contrition imperfect, although the confession was integral, including, in my opinion, everything I understood to have been an offense against God. For among other favors His Majesty has given me since my first Communion, there is this one: that I never fail to confess what I think is a sin even though venial. But without a doubt it seems to me that my salvation would have been in jeopardy if I should have then died since on the one hand my confessors were so poorly educated and on the other hand I was wretched, and for many other reasons.

11. Truly and certainly it seems to me that I am so startled in arriving at this part of my life and in seeing how apparently the Lord raised me from the dead that I am almost trembling within myself. I think it was good, O my soul, that you beheld the danger from which the Lord delivered you. And if out of love you do not give up offending Him, may you do so out of fear lest on any other of a thousand occasions He might let you die in a more dangerous state. I don't believe I'm adding much by saying "any other of a thousand," although I may be scolded by the one who commanded me to be moderate in telling about my sins; and they are being really beautified.

For the love of God I beg him not to cut out anything having to do with my faults, for this is where the magnificence of God and what He endures from a soul is seen more clearly. May He be blessed forever. May it please His Majesty that I die rather than ever cease to love Him.

Chapter 6

Treats of how much she owes the Lord for having given her conformity to His will in the midst of such severe trials, and how she took the glorious St. Joseph for her mediator and advocate, and of the great good he did her.

SUCH WERE THESE FOUR DAYS¹ I spent in this paroxysm that only the Lord can know the unbearable torments I suffered within myself: my tongue, bitten to pieces; my throat unable to let even water pass down — from not having swallowed anything and from the great weakness that oppressed me; everything seeming to be disjointed; the greatest confusion in my head; all shrivelled and drawn together in a ball. The result of the torments of those four days was that I was unable to stir, not an arm or a foot, neither hand nor head, unable to move as though I were dead; only one finger on my right hand it seems I was able to move. Since there was no way of touching me, because I was so bruised that I couldn't endure it, they moved me about in a sheet, one of the nuns at one end and another at the other.

This lasted until Easter. My only relief was that if they did not touch me, the pains often stopped, and on account of this bit of rest, I considered myself already well; for I was fearful I would lose patience. And so I was very happy to be without such sharp and continuous pains, although the quartan fevers² that remained with their accompanying severe chills were so harsh that I found them unbearable; the lack of appetite was very great.

2. Right away I was in such a hurry to return to the convent that I made them bring me back as I was.³ The one they expected to be brought back dead they received alive; but the body, worse than dead, was a pity to behold. The state of my weakness was indescribable, for I was then only bones. I may add that the above condition lasted for more than eight months. The paralysis, although it gradually got better, lasted almost three years.⁴ When I began to go about on hands and knees, I praised God. With great conformity to His will, I suffered all those years and—if not in these early sufferings—with great gladness. For it was all a trifle to me in comparison with the pains and torments suffered in the beginning. I was very conformed to the will of God, and I would have remained so even had He left me in this condition forever. It seems to me that all my longing to be cured was that I might remain alone in prayer as was my custom, for in the infirmary the suitable means for this was lacking. I went to confession very often. I spoke much about God in such a way that I was edifying to everyone, and they were amazed at the patience the Lord gave me. For if this patience had not come from the hand of His Majesty, it seemed it would have been impossible to suffer so much with so great contentment.

3. It was a great thing that He had granted me the favor in prayer which He did, for this made me understand the meaning of love for Him. For within that short time I saw some new virtues arise in me (although they were not strong since they were insufficient to sustain me in righteousness): not speaking evil of anyone, no matter how slight, but ordinarily avoiding all fault-finding. I was very much aware that I should not desire to say of another person what I would not want them to say of

me. I was extremely cautious about this in the occasions there were—although not so perfectly that I did not sometimes fail a little when the occasions were very great; but ordinarily I was faithful. And thus I so persuaded those who associated with me that they acquired the habit. It became generally known that where I was present there was no talking behind anyone's back, and this was the opinion of my friends, relatives, and all those I had taught. Nevertheless in other matters I will have to render an account to God for the bad example I gave them.

May His Majesty be pleased to pardon me, for I have been the cause of many evils but not with the intention of doing all the harm that was afterward the outcome of my deeds.

4. There remained in me the desire for solitude and a fondness for conversing and speaking about God. If I found someone with whom to speak thus, it gave me more happiness and recreation than all the suave—coarse, to use a better word—conversation of the world. I received Communion and confessed much more often and desired to do so. I liked to read good books very much, and felt the deepest repentance after having offended God. For often, I recall, I did not dare pray, because I feared as I would a severe punishment the very bitter sorrow I would have to feel at having offended God. This went on increasing afterward to such an extreme that I don't know what to compare the torment to. This feeling did not in any way spring from fear, but since I remembered the favors the Lord granted me in prayer and the many things I owed Him, and I saw how badly I was repaying Him, I could not endure it. And seeing my lack of amendment, I became extremely vexed about the many tears I was shedding over my faults, for neither were my resolutions nor were the hardships I suffered enough to keep me from placing myself in the occasion and falling again. They seemed fraudulent tears to me, and afterward the fault appeared to be greater, because I saw the wonderful favor the Lord bestowed in giving me these tears and such deep repentance. I endeavored to go to confession right away and, in my opinion, I did what I could to return to God's grace.

The whole trouble lay in not getting at the root of the occasions and with my confessors who were of little help. For had

they told me of the danger I was in and that I had the obligation to avoid those friendships, without a doubt I believe I would have remedied the matter. For in no way would I have endured being in mortal sin even for a day should I have understood that to be the case.

All these signs of fear of God came to me during prayer; and the greatest sign was that they were enveloped in love, for punishment did not enter my mind. This carefulness of conscience with respect to mortal sins lasted all during my illness. Oh, God help me, how I desired my health so as to serve Him more, and this health was the cause of all my harm.

5. Since I saw myself so crippled and still so young and how helpless the doctors of earth were, I resolved to go for aid to the doctors of heaven that they might cure me. For I still desired my health, even though I bore the illness with much happiness. And I thought sometimes that if in being well I were to be condemned, I would be better off this way. But nonetheless I thought I would be able to serve God much better if I were in good health. This is our mistake: not abandoning ourselves entirely to what the Lord does, for He knows best what is fitting for us.

6. I began to attend Mass and to recite devotional prayers that were highly approved, for I never cared for other devotions that some people practice, especially women, with those ceremonies, intolerable to me, but to them an aid for their devotion. Afterward I came to understand that they were not suitable devotions but superstitious ones. I took for my advocate and lord the glorious St. Joseph and earnestly recommended myself to him. I saw clearly that as in this need so in other greater ones concerning honor and loss of soul this father and lord of mine came to my rescue in better ways than I knew how to ask for. I don't recall up to this day ever having petitioned him for anything that he failed to grant. It is an amazing thing the great many favors God has granted me through the mediation of this blessed saint, the dangers I was freed from both of body and soul. For with other saints it seems the Lord has given them grace to be of help in one need, whereas with this glorious saint I have experience that he helps in all our needs and that the Lord wants us to understand that just as He was subject to St. Joseph on

earth—for since bearing the title of father, being the Lord's tutor, Joseph could give the Child command—so in heaven God does whatever he commands.

This has been observed by other persons, also through experience, whom I have told to recommend themselves to him. And so there are many who in experiencing this truth renew their devotion to him.

7. I endeavored to celebrate his feast with all the solemnity possible. But, in my desire to do so very carefully and well, I was filled more with vanity than with spirituality, though my intention was good. This was a fault I had, that if the Lord gave me the grace to do something good, what I did was filled with imperfections and many failures. In wrongdoing, curiosity, and vanity, I was especially skillful and diligent. May the Lord pardon me.

8. Because of my impressive experience of the goods this glorious saint obtains from God, I had the desire to persuade all to be devoted to him. I have not known anyone truly devoted to him and rendering him special services who has not advanced more in virtue. For in a powerful way he benefits souls who recommend themselves to him. It seems to me that for some years now I have asked him for something on his feast day, and my petition is always granted. If the request is somewhat out of line, he rectifies it for my greater good. If I were a person who had authority for writing I would willingly and in a very detailed way enlarge upon what I am saying about the favors this glorious saint did for me and for others. But so as to do no more than what they gave me the command to do, I will be briefer in many matters than I desire, more extensive in others than necessary—in sum, like one who has little discretion in anything that is good. I only ask for the love of God those who do not believe me to try, and they will see through experience the great good that comes from recommending oneself to this glorious patriarch and being devoted to him. Especially persons of prayer should always be attached to him. For I don't know how one can think about the Queen of Angels and about when she went through so much with the Infant Jesus without giving thanks to St. Joseph for the good assistance he then provided them both with. Those who

cannot find a master to teach them prayer should take this glorious saint for their master, and they will not go astray. Please God I may not have erred in being so bold as to speak about him, for although publicly I am devoted to him, I have always been lacking in serving and imitating him. For he being who he is brought it about that I could rise and walk and not be crippled; and I being who I am used this favor badly.

9. Who would have claimed I would so quickly fall after so many gifts from God, after His Majesty had begun to give me virtues which themselves roused me to His service, after I had seen myself almost dead and in such serious danger of being condemned, after having been raised up body and soul so that all who saw me were amazed to see me alive! What is this, my Lord! Must we live in so dangerous a life? For in writing this it seems to me that with Your favor and through Your mercy I can say what St. Paul said, although not with such perfection, that I no longer live but that You, my Creator, live in me. The reason is that for some years now, insofar as I can understand, You have held me by Your hand, and I see in myself desires and resolutions—and in some way have received proof of them through experience with many things during these years—not to do anything against Your will no matter how small; although I must offend Your Majesty in many ways without knowing it. And also it seems to me that no task to be done for love of You could be given me without my accomplishing it with great determination. And in some tasks You have helped me carry them out. I do not desire the world or any part of it; nor, it seems, does anything make me happy unless it comes from You, and the rest seems to me a heavy cross.

I could well be mistaken, and so it could be that I do not possess what I have spoken of, but You see well, my Lord, that insofar as I can understand I am not lying. And I fear—and with every reason—lest You abandon me. For now I know what happens to my strength and little virtue if You are not always giving and helping me so that I do not forsake You. May it please Your Majesty that even now while all this comes to mind I may not be separated from You.

I don't know why we desire to live since everything is so uncer-

tain. It seemed to me impossible, my Lord, to abandon You so completely. And since I did forsake You so many times, I cannot but fear. For when You withdrew a little from me, I fell to the ground. May You be blessed forever! Although I abandoned You, You did not abandon me so completely as not to turn to raise me up by always holding our Your hand to me. And often times, Lord, I did not want it; nor did I desire to understand how often You called me again, as I shall now tell.

Chapter 7

Treats of the ways by which she lost the favors the Lord had granted her and of how distracted a life she began to live. Speaks of the harm that results when monasteries of nuns are not strictly enclosed.

SINCE I THUS BEGAN to go from pastime to pastime, from vanity to vanity, from one occasion to another, to place myself so often in very serious occasions, and to allow my soul to become so spoiled by many vanities, I was then ashamed to return to the search for God by means of a friendship as special as is that found in the intimate exchange of prayer. And I was aided in this vanity by the fact that as the sins increased I began to lose joy in virtuous things and my taste for them. I saw very clearly, my Lord, that these were failing me because I was failing You.¹

This was the most terrible trick the devil could play on me, under the guise of humility: that seeing myself so corrupted I began to fear the practice of prayer. It seemed to me that, since in being wicked I was among the worst, it was better to go the way of the many, to recite what I was obliged to vocally and not to practice mental prayer and so much intimacy with God, for I merited to be with the devils. And it seemed to me that I was deceiving people since exteriorly I kept up such good appearances. Thus the convent where I resided was not at fault. For in my craftiness I strove to be held in esteem, although I did not advertently feign Christianity. In this matter of hypocrisy and vainglory, praise God, I don't recall ever having offended

Him knowingly, because at the first urgings I felt so much sorrow that the devil ended up with a loss and I with a gain. And so in this matter he never tempted me very much. Perhaps if God had permitted me to be tempted in this regard as severely as in other things, I would also have fallen. But His Majesty up till now has preserved me in this. May He be blessed forever! Rather, I grieved very much over being held in esteem since I knew what was down deep in my heart.

2. The fact that they did not consider me so bad was due to their seeing me so young and in the midst of so many occasions, often withdrawing into solitude to pray and read, speaking much about God, fond of having His image painted and put up in many places and of having an oratory and seeking in it the things that promote devotion, not engaging in fault-finding or other things of this sort that have the appearance of virtue. Joined to this was my appreciation—though through vanity—for the things that are usually esteemed in the world. As a result they gave me as much and even more freedom than they gave to the older ones. And they had great confidence in me. For being in a monastery I don't think I could have been able even to speak of such matters as taking the liberty to do something without permission, such as giving messages through holes in the walls, or at night; nor did I ever do so, for the Lord held me by His hand. It seemed to me—for I considered many things knowingly and purposely—that to risk the reputation of so many who were so good, because of my own wretchedness, would have been very wrong; as if the other things I was doing were good! Still, the evil done was not so knowingly done.

3. That's why it seems to me it did me great harm not to be in an enclosed monastery. For the freedom that those who were good were able to enjoy in good conscience (for they were not obligated to more since they did not make the vow of enclosure) would have certainly brought me, who am so wretched, to hell, if the Lord with so many remedies and means and with His very special favors had not drawn me out of this danger. Thus it seems to me that a monastery of women that allows freedom is a tremendous danger. And, what is more, it seems that for those who desire to live miserable lives it is a step on the way toward

hell rather than a remedy for their weaknesses.

I am not saying this of my own monastery² but of others I have known and seen. For in mine there are so many who serve the Lord authentically and with great perfection that His Majesty, being so good, cannot keep from favoring them. This monastery is not one of those very open ones, but in it is observed a truly religious way of life.

4. I say that it makes me very sad that the Lord needs to make special appeals—not once but many times—in order that one be saved. Since worldly honors and recreations are so exalted and one's obligations so poorly understood, may it please God that people do not take for virtue what is sin, as I often did. And there is so much difficulty in getting to know one's obligations that the Lord really needs to intervene in the matter.

If parents would take my advice since they do not want to place their daughters in an environment where the path to salvation is more dangerous than in the world, they would consider what pertains to their daughters' reputation. They should prefer a marriage of much lower status for their daughters to placing them in monasteries like these, unless their daughters are very inclined to virtue—and please God the monastery will then be beneficial. Otherwise parents should keep them at home. For if a daughter desires to be bad, she will not be able to conceal it at home for more than a short time, but in the monastery she can for a long time; and finally the Lord reveals it. She does harm not only to herself but to all. And at times the poor thing is not at fault, because she follows after what she finds. It is a pity that many who desire to withdraw from the world, thinking they are going to serve the Lord and flee worldly dangers, find themselves in ten worlds joined together without knowing how to protect themselves or remedy the situation. For youthfulness, sensuality, and the devil incite them and make them prone to follow after things that are of the very world. And yet, these are accepted as good, so to speak. It seems to me that somewhat like the unfortunate heretics these religious desire to be blind and to make others think that their path is a good one, and they believe it to be so without believing it, for within themselves dwells one who informs them that it is bad.

5. Oh, tremendous evil! Tremendous evil of religious—I am not speaking now more of women than of men—where religious life is not observed, where in a monastery there are two paths (one of virtue and religious life, and the other of a lack of religious life) and almost all walk in like manner; rather, in place of like manner I should say evil manner. For on account of our sins the greater number take the more imperfect path. And since there are more of them, it is the more favored path. True religious life is practiced so little that friars, or nuns, who are indeed about to follow wholeheartedly their call must fear those of their own house more than all the devils. And they must be more cautious and dissimulating in speaking about the friendship they desired to have with God than in speaking of other friendships and attachments that the devil arranges in monasteries. I don't know why we are amazed that there are so many evils in the Church since those who are to be the models from which all might copy the virtues are so obscurely fashioned that the spirit of the saints of the past has abandoned the religious communities. May it please the divine Majesty to remedy this as He sees it to be necessary, amen.

6. Now then, I engaged in these conversations thinking that since this was the custom, my soul would not receive the harm and distraction I afterward understood comes from such companionship. It seemed to me that something as general in many monasteries as this visiting would not do me any more harm than it did others who I say were good. I did not consider that they were much better and that what was a danger for me was not so much so for others, for I doubted that there was always some kind of danger—but at least there was some waste of time. While I was once with a person, the Lord at the outset of our acquaintance desired to make me understand that those friendships were not proper for me and to counsel me and give me advice in the midst of such thorough blindness. With great severity, Christ appeared before me, making me understand what He regretted about the friendship. I saw Him with the eyes of my soul more clearly than I could have with the eyes of my body. And this vision left such an impression on me that, though more than twenty-six years have gone by, it seems to me it is still pre-

sent. I was left very frightened and disturbed, and didn't want to see that person any more.

7. It did me much harm not to know that it was possible to see in other ways than with the bodily eyes. The devil urged me on in this ignorance and made me think that any other way of seeing was impossible and that I had fancied the vision or that it could have come from the devil and other things of this sort; although the feeling always remained with me that it was from God and not a fancy. But since the vision was not to my liking, I strove to conceal it from myself. Since I did not dare speak about this with anyone and the devil returned with great importunity assuring me that it was not wrong to see such a person and that I was not losing my honor but rather that it was increasing, I returned to the same conversation and also at other times to other conversations. For many years I took part in this noxious form of recreation. It did not seem to me — since I was engaged in it — to be as bad as it was; although sometimes I saw clearly that it was not good. But no other friendship was as much a distraction to me as this one of which I am speaking, for I was extremely fond of it.

8. Once at another time, when with this same person, we saw coming toward us — and others who were also there saw it — something that looked like a large toad, moving much more quickly than toads usually do. In that part where it came from I cannot understand how there could have been a nasty little creature like that in the middle of the day; nor had there ever been one there before. The effect it had on me, it seems to me, was not without mystery; and neither did I ever forget this. Oh, the greatness of God! With how much care and pity You were warning me in every way, and how little it benefited me!

9. There was a nun there,³ a relative of mine, older and a great servant of God and very religious. She also warned me sometimes. Not only did I not believe her, but I was annoyed with her and felt she was scandalized for no reason at all.

I have spoken of this to make known my wickedness and the great goodness of God and to what extent I merited hell for such outrageous ingratitude; and also that if the Lord sometime should ordain and be pleased that a nun read this she might learn a

lesson from me. I beg her for the love of our Lord to flee recreations like these. May His Majesty be pleased that someone may be disillusioned by me in the place of the many persons I deluded, telling them that these recreations were not wrong and reassuring them in the midst of so great a danger. I did this on account of my blindness, for it was not my desire purposely to mislead them. And through the bad example I gave them—as I said⁴—I was the cause of many evils, not realising I was doing so much wrong.

10. When I was sick during those first days before I knew how to take care of myself, I had the greatest desire to help others improve, a very common temptation of beginners, although in my case it turned out well. Since I loved my father so much, I desired for him the good I felt I got out of the practice of prayer. It seemed to me that in this life there could be no greater good than the practice of prayer. So in roundabout ways, as much as I could, I began to strive to get him to pray. I gave him books for this purpose. Since he had such virtue, as I mentioned,⁵ he settled into this practice so well that within five or six years—it seems it was—he was so advanced that I praised the Lord very much, and this gave me the greatest consolation. Very severe were the many kinds of trials he had; all of them he suffered with the deepest conformity to God's will. He came often to see me, for it consoled him to speak of the things of God.

11. After I had begun to live in such havoc, and without practicing prayer, and since I saw that he thought I was living as usual, I could not bear to let him be deceived. For thinking it was the more humble thing to do, I had gone a year and more without prayer. And this, as I shall say afterward,⁶ was the greatest temptation I had, because on account of this I was heading just about straight to perdition. For when I practiced prayer, I offended God one day but then others I turned to recollection and withdrew more from the occasions.

Since this blessed man came to talk with me about prayer, it was a bitter thing for me to see him so deceived as to think I conversed with God as I was accustomed before. And I told him that I no longer practiced prayer, but didn't give the reason. I brought up my illnesses as making it impossible for me. For

though I was cured of that very serious illness, I have always up till now had illnesses and still have some that are serious enough and of various sorts, although lately not so severe. In particular, for twenty years I had vomiting spells every morning so that I could not eat anything until after noon; sometimes I had to wait longer. From the time I began to receive Communion more frequently, I have had to vomit at night before going to bed. And it is more painful because I have to induce it with a feather or some other thing, for if I let this go the sickness I feel becomes very bad. I am almost never, in my opinion, without many pains, and sometimes very severe ones, especially in the heart, although the sickness that gripped me almost continually occurs very seldom. I was cured eight years ago of the harsh paralysis and other illnesses with fever that I frequently suffered. All these illnesses now bother me so little that I am often glad, thinking the Lord is served by something.

12. My father believed that my illnesses were the reason for my not praying; for he did not lie, and by this time, in accord with the things I spoke of to him, I shouldn't have lied either. So that he might believe more easily (for I saw clearly that there was no excuse for giving up prayer), I told him that I was doing a great deal by being able to keep up with the choir duties. But this was not sufficient cause to set aside something for which bodily strength is not necessary but only love and a habit; and the Lord always provides the opportunity if we desire. I say "always" because, although on occasion and also sometimes in sickness we are impeded from having hours free for solitude, there is no lack of other time when we have the health for this. And even in sickness itself and these other occasions the prayer is genuine when it comes from a soul that loves to offer the sickness up and accept what is happening and be conformed to it and to the other thousand things that happen. Prayer is an exercise of love, and it would be incorrect to think that if there is no time for solitude there is no prayer at all. With a little care great blessings can come when because of our labors the Lord takes from us the time we had set for prayer. And so I have found these blessings when I have had a good conscience.

13. But my father because of his esteem and love for me be-

lieved everything I said; in fact he pitied me. But since he had already reached so sublime a state, he did not afterward spend as much time with me but would leave after a brief visit; for he said it was time lost. Since I wasted time on other vanities, I cared little about losing time.

He wasn't the only one; I also tried to get some other persons to practice prayer. Even though I was taking part in these vanities, when I saw others who were fond of praying, I told them how to practice meditation and assisted them and gave them books. For, from the time I began prayer, as I said, I had this desire that others serve God. It seemed to me that since I no longer served the Lord as I knew I should, the knowledge His Majesty had given me would not be lost and that others would serve Him through me. I say this to make known the terrible blindness in which I lived, for I was allowing myself to get lost and striving to save others.

14. At this time my father was seized with an illness that lasted for some days and from which he died. I went to take care of him, I who was sicker in soul, steeped in many vanities, than he was in body; although, during this entire more lax period of which I am speaking, never so steeped in them—insofar as I understood—as to be in mortal sin. For, should I have understood such to be the case, I would have in no way remained in that condition.

I suffered much hardship during his sickness. I believe I served him somewhat for the trials he suffered during mine. Although I was very sick, I forced myself. Since in losing him I was losing every good and joy, and he was everything to me, I had great determination not to show him my grief and until he would die to act as though I were well. When I saw him coming to the end of his life, it seemed my soul was being wrenched from me, for I loved him dearly.

15. I cannot help but praise the Lord when I remember the death he died and his joy in dying, the counsels he gave us after receiving extreme unction, his begging us to recommend him to God and ask mercy for him and always to serve God and reflect on how all things come to an end. And in tears he told us about the great sorrow he felt in not having served God, and that he

would have liked to be a friar; I mean, he would have chosen one of the strictest orders.

I am very certain that fifteen days before his death the Lord made it known to him that he was not going to live. For before this, even though he was sick, he did not think he was going to die. Afterward, even though he had much improved and the doctors told him so, he paid no attention to that but gave his attention to setting his soul in order.

16. His main sickness was a very severe pain in his shoulders which never left him. Sometimes it hurt him so much he was in agony. I told him that since he was so devoted to the memory of when the Lord carried the burden of the cross that His Majesty thought He would like to make him experience something of what He suffered with that pain. This comforted my father so much that it seems to me I never heard him complain again. For three days his senses were very dull. On the day he died the Lord restored them so fully that we were amazed and he was in possession of them until, in the middle of the Creed, reciting it himself, he died.⁷ He looked like an angel. This it seems to me he was, so to speak, in soul and character, for he preserved his soul very well.

I don't know why I have told this, unless the more to blame my wicked life after having seen such a death and known such a life. For in order to resemble in some way a father like this I should have improved. His confessor—who was a Dominican, a very learned man⁸—said he did not doubt but that my father had gone straight to heaven. He had been confessor to my father for some years and praised his purity of conscience.

17. This Dominican Father who was very good and God-fearing profited me a great deal. For I went to confession to him, and he took it upon himself with care to do good for my soul and make me understand the perdition that I was bringing on myself. He had me receive Communion every fifteen days. And, little by little, in beginning to talk to him, I discussed my prayer with him. He told me not to let it go, that it could in no way do me anything but good. I began to return to it, although not to give up the occasions of sin; and I never again abandoned it.

I was living an extremely burdensome life, because in prayer

I understood more clearly my faults. On the one hand God was calling me; on the other hand I was following the world. All the things of God made me happy; those of the world held me bound. It seems I desired to harmonize these two contraries—so inimical to one another—such as are the spiritual life and sensory joys, pleasures, and pastimes. In prayer I was having great trouble, for my spirit was not proceeding as lord but as slave. And so I was not able to shut myself within myself (which was my whole manner of procedure in prayer); instead, I shut within myself a thousand vanities.

Thus I passed many years, for now I am surprised how I could have put up with both and not abandon either the one or the other. Well do I know that to abandon prayer was no longer in my hands, for He held me in His, He who desired to give me greater favors.

18. Oh, help me God, if I should have to tell about the occasions God freed me from in these years and how I returned and placed myself in them again and of the dangers of losing my reputation completely from which He liberated me! I was doing deeds that uncovered what I was, and the Lord was covering my evils and uncovering some little virtue, if I had it, and making it great in the eyes of others so that they always esteemed me highly. For although sometimes my vanities leaked out, they were not recognized since other things that appeared good were what were noticed.

And the reason was that the Knower of all things already saw that this was necessary in order that those to whom I would afterward speak of His service would give me some credibility, and in His sovereign largess He looked not at my great sins but at the desires I often had to serve Him and at the sorrow I felt for not having the strength in me to put these desires into practice.

19. O Lord of my soul! How can I extol the favors You gave me during these years! And how at the time when I offended You most You quickly prepared me with an extraordinary repentance to taste Your favors and gifts! Indeed, my King, You, as One who well knew what to me would be most distressing, chose as a means the most delicate and painful punishment. With wonderful gifts You punished my sins!

I do not believe I am speaking nonsense, although it would be good if I were to lose my senses in turning now again to the memory of my ingratitude and wickedness.

It was so much more painful, with my temperament, to receive favors, when I had fallen into serious faults than to receive punishment. For one of these favors, it seems certain to me, bewildered and confounded and wearied me more than many sicknesses joined with many other trials. For the latter, I saw I merited, and it seemed to me I was paying something for my sins, although it all amounted to little because they were so many. But to see myself receiving favors again after paying so badly for those received is a kind of terrible torment for me. I believe this is so for all those who have had some knowledge and love of God, because with noble and virtuous hearts this is so even in human affairs. Here was the cause of my tears and my annoyance with myself in being aware of what I felt; I saw myself to be the type that is ever on the eve of falling, although my resolutions and desires—for that length of time I say—were firm.

20. A great evil it is for a soul to be alone in the midst of so many dangers. It seems to me that if I should have had someone to talk all this over with it would have helped me, at least out of shame, not to fall again since I did not have any shame before God.

For this reason I would counsel those who practice prayer to seek, at least in the beginning, friendship and association with other persons having the same interest. This is something most important even though the association may be only to help one another with prayers. The more of these prayers there are, the greater the gain. Since friends are sought out for conversations and human attachments, even though these latter may not be good, so as to relax and better enjoy telling about vain pleasures, I don't know why it is not permitted that persons beginning truly to love and to serve God talk with some others about their joys and trials, which all who practice prayer undergo. For if the friendship they desired to have with His Majesty is authentic, there is no reason to fear vainglory. And when these persons overcome vainglory in its first stirrings, they come away with merit. I believe that they who discuss these joys and trials for

the sake of this friendship with God will benefit themselves and those who hear them, and they will come away instructed; even without understanding how, they will have instructed their friends.

21. Those who experience vainglory in speaking of these things will also experience it in attending Mass with devotion if they are seen and in doing other things they must do if they want to be Christian; and these deeds they are not allowed to abandon for fear of vainglory.

Since this spiritual friendship is so extremely important for souls not yet fortified in virtue—since they have so many opponents and friends to incite them to evil—I don't know how to urge it enough. It seems to me the devil has used the following artifice as something very important to him: those who truly want to love and to please God are as hidden as other unrighteous persons are incited to make their evil known so that evil becomes so customary it seems socially justified; and the offenses committed against God in this matter are published.

22. I don't know if I am speaking foolish words. If I am, may your Reverence^o tear them up; and if they are not, help my stupidity by adding here a great deal. There is so much sluggishness in matters having to do with the service of God that it is necessary for those who serve Him to become shields for one another that they might advance. For it is considered good to walk in the vanities and pleasures of the world, and those who don't, are unnoticed. If any begin to give themselves to God, there are so many to criticize them that they need to seek companionship to defend themselves until they are so strong that it is no longer a burden for them to suffer this criticism. And if they don't seek this companionship, they will find themselves in much difficulty.

It seems to me this must be why some saints used to go to the deserts. And it is a kind of humility not to trust in oneself but to believe that through those with whom one converses God will help and increase charity while it is being shared. And there are a thousand graces I would not dare speak of if I did not have powerful experience of the benefit that comes from this sharing.

It is true that I am the weakest and most wicked of all human

beings. But I believe they will not be lost who, humbling themselves, even though they be strong, do not believe by themselves but believe this one who has experience. Of myself I know and say that if the Lord had not revealed this truth to me and given me the means by which I could ordinarily talk with persons who practiced prayer, I, falling and rising, would have ended by throwing myself straight into hell. For in falling I had many friends to help me; but in rising I found myself so alone that I am now amazed I did not remain ever fallen. And I praise the mercy of God, for it was He alone who gave me His hand. May He be blessed forever and ever. Amen.

Chapter 8

Treats of the great good it did her not to turn from prayer completely and thereby lose her soul, and of what an excellent means prayer is for winning back what is lost. Urges all to this practice. Tells how it is so highly profitable and that even though one may abandon it again, there is a great value in giving some time to so great a good.

THOUGH I SEE CLEARLY that it will be to no one's liking to see something so wretched, not without cause have I dwelt at such length on this period of my life. For I certainly wish that those who read this would abhor me when they see a soul so pertinacious and ungrateful toward Him who bestowed on her so many favors. And would that I had the permission to tell of the many times I failed God during this period by not seeking support from this strong pillar of prayer.

2. I voyaged on this tempestuous sea for almost twenty years with these fallings and risings and this evil—since I fell again—and in a life so beneath perfection that I paid almost no attention to venial sins. And mortal sins, although I feared them, I did not fear them as I should have since I did not turn away from the dangers. I should say that it is one of the most painful lives, I think, that one can imagine; for neither did I enjoy God nor did I find happiness in the world. When I was experiencing the enjoyments of the world, I felt sorrow when I recalled what I owed to God. When I was with God, my attachments to the

world disturbed me. This is a war so troublesome that I don't know how I was able to suffer it even a month, much less for so many years.

However, I see clearly the great mercy the Lord bestowed on me; for though I continued to associate with the world, I had the courage to practice prayer. I say courage, for I do not know what would require greater courage among all the things there are in the world than to betray the king and know that he knows it and yet never leave His presence. Though we are always in the presence of God, it seems to me the manner is different with those who practice prayer, for they are aware that He is looking at them. With others, it can happen that several days pass without their recalling that God sees them.

3. True, during these years there were many months, and I believe sometimes a year, that I kept from offending the Lord. And I put forth some effort, and at times a great deal of it, not to offend Him. Because all that I write is said with complete truthfulness, I shall treat of this effort now. But I remember little of these good days, and so they must have been few; and a lot about the bad ones. Few days passed without my devoting long periods to prayer, unless I was very sick or very busy. When I was sick, I felt better when with God. I tried to get persons who talked with me to practice prayer, and I besought the Lord for them. I frequently spoke of Him.

So, save for the year I mentioned, for more than eighteen of the twenty-eight years since I began prayer, I suffered this battle and conflict between friendship with God and friendship with the world. During the remaining years of which I have yet to speak, the cause of the war changed, although the war was not a small one. But since it was, in my opinion, for the service of God and with knowledge of the vanity that the world is, everything went smoothly, as I shall say afterward.

4. I have recounted all this at length, as I already mentioned,¹ so that the mercy of God and my ingratitude might be seen; also, in order that one might understand the great good God does for a soul that willingly disposes itself for the practice of prayer, even though it is not as disposed as is necessary. I recount this also that one may understand how if the soul

perseveres in prayer, in the midst of the sins, temptations, and failures of a thousand kinds that the devil places in its path, in the end, I hold as certain, the Lord will draw it forth to the harbor of salvation as—now it seems—He did for me. May it please His Majesty that I do not get lost again.

5. The good that one who practices prayer possesses has been written of by many saints and holy persons; I mean mental prayer—glory be to God for this good! If it were not for this good, even though I have little humility, I should not be so proud as to dare speak about mental prayer.

I can speak of what I have experience of. It is that in spite of any wrong they who practice prayer do, they must not abandon prayer since it is the means by which they can remedy the situation; and to remedy it without prayer would be much more difficult. May the devil not tempt them, the way he did me, to give up prayer out of humility. May those persons believe that God's words cannot fail. For if we are truly repentant and resolve not to offend God, He will return to the former friendship and bestow the favors He previously did, and sometimes more if the repentance merits it.

Whoever has not begun the practice of prayer, I beg for the love of the Lord not to go without so great a good. There is nothing here to fear but only something to desire. Even if there be no great progress, or much effort in reaching such perfection as to deserve the favors and mercies God bestows on the more generous, at least a person will come to understand the road leading to heaven. And if one perseveres, I trust then in the mercy of God, who never fails to repay anyone who has taken Him for a friend. For mental prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us. In order that love be true and the friendship endure, the wills of the friends must be in accord. The will of the Lord, it is already known, cannot be at fault; our will is vicious, sensual, and ungrateful. And if you do not yet love Him as He loves you because You have not reached the degree of conformity with His will, you will endure this pain of spending a long while with one who is so different from you when you see how much it

benefits you to possess His friendship and how much He loves you.

6. O infinite goodness of my God, for it seems to me I see that such is the way You are and the way I am! O delight of angels, when I see this I desire to be completely consumed in loving You! How certainly You do suffer the one who suffers to be with You! Oh, what a good friend You make, my Lord! How You proceed by favoring and enduring. You wait for the others to adapt to Your nature, and in the meanwhile You put up with theirs! You take into account, my Lord, the times when they love You, and in one instant of repentance You forget their offenses.

I have seen this clearly myself. I do not know, my Creator, why it is that every one does not strive to reach You through this special friendship, and why those who are wicked, who are not conformed to Your will, do not, in order that You make them good, allow You to be with them at least two hours each day, even though they may not be with You, but with a thousand disturbances from worldly cares and thoughts, as was the case with me. Through this effort they make to remain in such good company (for You see that in the beginning they cannot do more, nor afterward, sometimes), You, Lord, force the devils not to attack them, so that each day the devils' strength against them lessens; and You give them the victory over the devils. Yes, for You do not kill—life of all lives!—any of those who trust in You and desire You for friend. But You sustain the life of the body with more health, and You give life to the soul.

7. I don't understand what they fear who fear to begin the practice of mental prayer. I don't know what they are afraid of. The devil is doing his task well of making the truth seem evil if through fears he prevents me from thinking of how I have offended God, and of the many things I owe Him, and of what leads to hell and what to glory, and of the great trials and sufferings the Lord endured for me.

This was my whole method of prayer, and the method was this one for as long as I walked in the midst of these dangers; these are the things I thought of when I was able. And very often, for some years, I was more anxious that the hour I had deter-

mined to spend in prayer be over than I was to remain there, and more anxious to listen for the striking of the clock than to attend to other good things. And I don't know what heavy penance could have come to mind that frequently I would not have gladly undertaken rather than recollect myself in the practice of prayer. It is certain that so unbearable was the force used by the devil, or coming from my wretched habits, to prevent me from going to prayer, and so unbearable the sadness I felt on entering the oratory, that I had to muster up all my courage (and they say I have no small amount of that, and it is observed that God has given me more than women usually have, but I have made poor use of it) in order to force myself; and in the end the Lord helped me. After I had made this effort, I found myself left with greater quiet and delight than sometimes when I had the desire to pray.

8. Now, then, if the Lord put up with someone as miserable as myself for so long a time, and it seems clear that by this means all my evils were remedied, who, no matter how bad they may be, has reason to fear? For no matter how bad they may be, they will not be bad for as many years as I was after having received so many favors from the Lord. Who can lose confidence? For the Lord endured so much with me only because I desired and strove to have some place and time in order that He might be with me. And this I often did without eagerness but through my own great struggles or through the strength the Lord Himself gave me. For if those who do not serve Him but offend Him derive so much good from prayer and find it so necessary—and no one can truly discover any harm that prayer can do, the greatest harm being not to practice it—why do those who serve God and desire to serve Him abandon it? I, indeed, cannot understand why, unless it is that they want to undergo the trials of life with greater trial and close the door on God so that He may not make them happy. I certainly pity those who serve the Lord at their own cost, because for those who practice prayer the Lord Himself pays the cost since through their little labor He gives them delight so that with the help of this delight they might suffer the trials.

9. Because much will be said about these delights that the Lord

gives to those who persevere in prayer, I shall not say anything here. I say only that prayer is the door to favors as great as those He granted me. If this door is closed, I don't know how He will grant them. For even though He may desire to enter and take delight in a soul and favor it, there is no way of His doing this, for He wants it alone and clean and desirous of receiving His graces. If we place many stumbling blocks in His path and don't do a thing to remove them, how will He be able to come to us? And we desire God to grant us great favors!

10. To make known His mercy and the great good it did me not to abandon prayer and reading. I shall speak here—since it is so important to understand these things—about the heavy battery the devil uses against a soul in order to win it over, and about the skill and mercy with which the Lord endeavors to bring it back to Himself, and about how to be on guard against the dangers I was not on guard against. Above all, for love of our Lord and for the great love with which He wins us back to Himself, I beg souls to watch out for the occasions. For we have nothing to rely on for our defense when we are placed in these occasions where there are so many enemies to war against us and so many weaknesses of our own.

11. Would that I knew how to depict the captivity my soul was in during this time. I understood clearly that I was in captivity, but I wasn't able to understand why; nor was I able to believe completely that what my confessors did not consider serious was less wrong than I in my soul felt it was. One confessor told me when I went to him with a scruple that even if I were to have sublime contemplation such occasions and associations would not be harmful to me. This happened toward the end of this period when by the mercy of God I was withdrawing more from great dangers; but I hadn't completely abandoned the occasions. Since my confessors saw my good desires and my devotion to prayer, they thought I was doing a great deal. But my soul understood that it was doing what it was obligated to do for Him to whom it owed so much. I consider it now a pity that so much happened and so little help was found anywhere, except in God, and that they gave it a great pretext for its pastimes and satisfactions by saying that these were licit.

12. The torment I felt in hearing sermons was not small. I was very fond of them, so fond that if I saw someone preach well and with spirit, I felt a special love for that person, without striving for the love myself, so that I didn't know where it came from. Hardly ever did a sermon seem so bad to me that I didn't listen to it eagerly, even though according to others who heard it the preaching was not good. When it was good, the sermon was for me a very special recreation. After I had begun the practice of prayer, speaking of God or hearing others speak of Him hardly ever tired me. On the one hand I found great comfort in sermons, while on the other I was tormented, for through them I understood that I wasn't what I should have been — not by a far cry. I begged the Lord to help me. But I must have failed, as it appears to me now, because I did not put all my trust in His Majesty and lose completely the trust I had in myself. I searched for a remedy, I made attempts, but I didn't understand that all is of little benefit if we do not take away completely the trust we have in ourselves and place it in God.

I wanted to live (for I well understood that I was not living but was struggling with a shadow of death), but I had no one to give me life, and I was unable to catch hold of it. He who had the power to give it to me was right in not helping me, for so often had He brought me back to Himself; and so often had I abandoned Him.

Chapter 9

Treats of the means by which the Lord began to awaken her soul and give it light amid such thick darknesses and strengthen her virtues that she might not offend Him.

WELL, MY SOUL now was tired; and, in spite of its desire, my wretched habits would not allow it rest. It happened to me that one day entering the oratory I saw a statue they had borrowed for a certain feast to be celebrated in the house. It represented the much wounded Christ¹ and was very devotional so that beholding it I was utterly distressed in seeing Him

that way, for it well represented what He suffered for us. I felt so keenly aware of how poorly I thanked Him for those wounds that, it seems to me, my heart broke. Beseeching Him to strengthen me once and for all that I might not offend Him, I threw myself down before Him with the greatest outpouring of tears.

2. I was very devoted to the glorious Magdalene and frequently thought about her conversion, especially when I received Communion. For since I knew the Lord was certainly present there within me, I, thinking that He would not despise my tears, placed myself at His feet. And I didn't know what I was saying (He did a great deal who allowed me to shed them for Him, since I so quickly forgot that sentiment); and I commended myself to this glorious saint that she might obtain pardon for me.

3. But in this latter instance with this statue I am speaking of, it seems to me I profited more, for I was very distrustful of myself and placed all my trust in God. I think I then said that I would not rise from there until He granted what I was begging Him for. I believe certainly this was beneficial to me, because from that time I went on improving.

4. This is the method of prayer I then used: since I could not reflect discursively with the intellect, I strove to represent Christ within me, and it did me greater good — in my opinion — to represent Him in those scenes where I saw Him more alone. It seemed to me that being alone and afflicted, as a person in need, He had to accept me. I had many simple thoughts like these.

The scene of His prayer in the garden, especially, was a comfort to me; I strove to be His companion there. If I could, I thought of the sweat and agony He had undergone in that place. I desired to wipe away the sweat He so painfully experienced, but I recall that I never dared to actually do it, since my sins appeared to me so serious. I remained with Him as long as my thoughts allowed me to, for there were many distractions that tormented me. Most nights, for many years before going to bed when I commended myself to God in preparation for sleep, I always pondered for a little while this episode of the prayer in the garden. I did this even before I was a nun since I was told that one gains many indulgences by doing so. I believe my soul

gained a great deal through this custom because I began to practice prayer without knowing what it was; and the custom became so habitual that I did not abandon it, just as I did not fail to make the sign of the cross before sleeping.

5. But to return to what I was saying about the torment my distracting thoughts gave me, this torment is a characteristic of the method in which you proceed without discursive reflection on the part of the intellect. For such a method requires that the soul be very advanced, or lost; I mean lost with regard to discursive reflection. In its progress it advances a great deal because it advances in love. But to reach this point the cost is very high, except in the case of persons whom the Lord desires to bring quickly to the prayer of quiet, for I know some. Those who follow this path of no discursive reflection will find that a book can be a help for recollecting oneself quickly. It helped me also to look at fields, or water, or flowers. In these things I found a remembrance of the Creator. I mean that they awakened and recollected me and served as a book and reminded me of my ingratitude and sins. As for heavenly or sublime things, my intellect was so coarse that it could never, never imagine them until the Lord in another way showed them to me.

6. I had such little ability to represent things with my intellect that if I hadn't seen the things my imagination was not of use to me, as it is to other persons who can imagine things and thus recollect themselves. I could only think about Christ as He was as man, but never in such a way that I could picture Him within myself no matter how much I read about His beauty or how many images I saw of Him. I was like those who are blind or in darkness; they speak with a person and see that that person is with them because they know with certainty that the other is there (I mean they understand and believe this, but they do not see the other); such was the case with me when I thought of our Lord. This was the reason I liked images so much. Unfortunate are those who through their own fault lose this great good. It indeed appears that they do not love the Lord, for if they loved Him they would rejoice to see a portrait of Him, just as here on earth it really gives joy to see one whom you deeply love.

7. At this time they gave me *The Confessions of St. Augustine*.² It seems the Lord ordained this, because I had not tried to procure a copy, nor had I ever seen one. I am very fond of St. Augustine, because the convent where I stayed as a lay person belonged to his order;³ and also because he had been a sinner, for I found great consolation in sinners whom, after having been sinners, the Lord brought back to Himself. It seemed to me I could find help in them and that since the Lord had pardoned them He could also pardon me. But there was one thing that left me inconsolable, as I have mentioned, and that was that the Lord called them only once, and they did not turn back and fall again; whereas in my case I had turned back so often that I was worn out from it. But by considering the love He bore me, I regained my courage, for I never lost confidence in His mercy; in myself, I lost it many times.

8. Oh, God help me, how it frightens me, my soul's blindness despite so much assistance from God! It made me fearful to see how little I could do by myself and how bound I became so that I was unable to resolve to give myself entirely to God.

As I began to read the *Confessions*, it seemed to me I saw myself in them. I began to commend myself very much to this glorious saint. When I came to the passage where he speaks about his conversion and read how he heard that voice in the garden,⁴ it only seemed to me, according to what I felt in my heart, that it was I the Lord called. I remained for a long time totally dissolved in tears and feeling within myself utter distress and weariness. Oh, how a soul suffers, God help me, by losing the freedom it should have in being itself; and what torments it undergoes! I marvel now at how I could have lived in such great affliction. May God be praised who gave me the life to rise up from a death so deadly.

9. It seemed to me my soul gained great strength from the Divine Majesty and that He must have heard my cries and taken pity on so many tears.⁵ The inclination to spend more time with Him began to grow. I started to shun the occasions of sin, because when they were avoided I then returned to loving His Majesty. In my opinion, I clearly understood that I loved Him; but I did not understand as I should have what true love of God

consists in.

It doesn't seem to me I was yet finished preparing myself to desire to serve Him when His Majesty began to favor me again. Apparently, what others strive for with great labor, the Lord gains for me only through my desire to receive it, for He was now, in these later years, giving me delights and favors. I did not beseech Him to give me tenderness of devotion, never would I have dared to do that. I only begged Him to pardon my great sins and to give me the grace not to offend Him. Since I saw that my sins were so great, I would never have had the boldness to desire favors or delights. Clearly, it seems, He took pity on me and showed great mercy in admitting me before Him and bringing me into His presence, for I saw that if He Himself had not accomplished this, I would not have come.

Only once in my life, when in great dryness, do I recall having asked for spiritual delight. And when I became aware of what I was doing, I got so confused that the very annoyance at seeing myself with such lack of humility brought about what I had dared to ask for. I knew well that it was permissible to ask for this, but it seemed to me that such a request was licit for those who were prepared and determined to do every good and not to offend God. It seemed to me that the tears I shed were womanish and without strength since I did not obtain by them what I desired. But still, I believe they were valuable for me because, as I say, especially after these two instances^b of such great compunction and weariness of heart over my sins, I began to give myself more to prayer and to become less involved with things that did me harm, although I still did not avoid them completely; but—as I say—God was helping me turn aside from them. Since His Majesty was not waiting for anything other than some preparedness in me, the spiritual graces went on increasing in the manner I shall tell. It is not a customary thing for the Lord to give them save to those with greater purity of conscience.

Chapter 10

*Begins to tell about the favors the Lord granted her in prayer, of how we ourselves can help, and how important it is that we understand the graces the Lord gives us. Asks the one to whom this is sent to keep secret what she writes about from here on, for they commanded her to speak so personally about the favors the Lord grants her.*¹

ISOMETIMES EXPERIENCED, as I said,² although very briefly, the beginning of what I will now speak about. It used to happen, when I represented Christ within me in order to place myself in His presence, or even while reading, that a feeling of the presence of God would come upon me unexpectedly so that I could in no way doubt He was within me or I totally immersed in Him. This did not occur after the manner of a vision. I believe they call the experience “mystical theology.” The soul is suspended in such a way that it seems to be completely outside itself. The will loves; the memory, it seems to me, is almost lost. For, as I say, the intellect does not work, but it is as though amazed by all it understands because God desires that it understand, with regard to the things His Majesty represents to it, that it understands nothing.

2. Before this, I felt very habitually a tenderness that, it seems to me, can in part be acquired, a favor that is neither entirely of the senses nor entirely spiritual. Everything is given by God, but it seems we can help a great deal to receive this tenderness by considering our lowliness and the ingratitude we have shown toward God, the many things He did for us, His Passion with such heavy sorrows, His life so afflicted, and by delighting in the sight of His works, His grandeur, how He loves us, and in the many other things that those who truly want to improve spiritually are often able to find all around them, even though they do not seek to do so deliberately. If some love accompanies this activity, the soul is gladdened, the heart is touched with tenderness, and tears begin to flow. Sometimes it seems we draw forth the tears through our own effort, at other times it seems the Lord grants them to us, since we are unable to resist them. Apparently, His Majesty repays us for that bit of care with a

gift as great as is the consolation He gives a soul when it sees that it weeps for so great a Lord. And I am not surprised, for he surpasses reason in bestowing consolation: He comforts here; He gladdens there.

3. It seems to me the following comparison that now comes to mind is a good one, for these joys of prayer must be like those of heaven. Since souls do not see more than what the Lord, in conformity with their merits, desires them to see — and they see their few merits — they are happy with the place they have, even though there is the greatest difference in heaven between one joy and another. This difference is far more than the difference here below between some spiritual joys and others, which is very great.

Truly, in the beginning when God grants it this favor, it almost seems to the soul that there is nothing more for it to desire, and it considers itself well repaid for all its service. It is more than right, for one of these tears that, as I say, we almost acquire ourselves — although without God nothing is accomplished — cannot be bought in my opinion with all the trials in the world; for much is gained by these tears. And what greater gain is there than to have evidence that we are pleasing God? Thus they who reach this point praise God much and know themselves to be very indebted. For now it seems, if they don't turn back, that they are chosen for God's own house and kingdom.

4. Let them pay no attention to the kinds of humility, which I will discuss later,³ in which it seems to some that it is humility not to acknowledge that God is giving them gifts. Let us understand most clearly the real fact: God gives them to us without any merit on our part. And let us thank His Majesty for them, because, if we do not acknowledge we are receiving them, we will not awaken ourselves to love. And it is very certain that while we see more clearly that we are rich, over and above knowing that we are poor, more benefit comes to us, and even more authentic humility. Anything else would amount to intimidating the spirit, making it believe that it isn't capable of great blessings, so that when the Lord begins to give them to it, it starts to get frightened about vainglory. Let us believe that He who gives us the blessings will give us the grace so that when

the devil begins to tempt us in this way we shall understand and have the fortitude to resist—I mean, if we walk with sincerity before God, aiming at pleasing Him alone and not people.

5. It is very obvious that we love others more when we often recall the good works they do for us. If it is permissible, and therefore meritorious, to keep always in mind that we have our being from God, that He created us from nothing and sustains us, and all the other benefits flowing from His death and trials—for long before He created us He obtained them for each one now living—why would it not be permissible for me to see and understand and often consider that I ordinarily used to speak about vanities and that now the Lord has given me the desire to speak of nothing but Him? Here is a jewel by which, in recalling that it is a gift and that we possess it, we are compelled to love the giver. For love is the genuine fruit of prayer when prayer is rooted in humility. What then will happen when they see in their power other than precious jewels, like those some servants of God have already received, of contempt of the world and even of themselves? It is clear that they must consider themselves more indebted and obliged to serve and to understand that we have no right to any of this, and to know the generosity of the Lord. For to a soul as poor and wretched and without merit as mine, for which the first of these jewels was enough, and more than enough, He desired to grant more riches; more than I knew how to desire.

6. It is necessary to draw out strength again for service and to strive not to be ungrateful. For the Lord gives these riches under this condition that if we do not use well the treasure and high state in which He places us, He will take them from us and we shall be left poorer. And His Majesty will give the jewels to those who will display them and gain profit from them, both for themselves and for others.

For how can people benefit and share their gifts lavishly if they do not understand that they are rich? In my opinion, it is impossible because of our nature for those who don't know they are favored by God to have enthusiasm for great things. We are so miserable and so inclined to earthly things that those who do not understand they have a pledge of heavenly things

will find it hard to abhor in fact and with detachment everything here below. By these gifts, the Lord gives us the fortitude that by our sins we are losing. If people don't have, along with a living faith, some pledge of the love God has for them, they will not desire to be despised and belittled by everyone and have all the other great virtues that the perfect possess. For our nature is so dead that we go after what we see in the present. Thus these very favors are what awaken faith and strengthen it. Now it could be that, since I am so wretched I am judging others by myself, others may find they have need of no more than the truth of faith in order to perform very perfect works—and I, being so miserable, have had need of everything.

7. They will say whether this is so or not. I am speaking about what has happened to me, as I have been ordered to do. And if what I say isn't worthwhile, the one I'm sending it to will tear it up,⁴ for he will understand what is of little worth better than I. I beseech him for the love of the Lord to publish what I have said up to this point about my wretched life. I now give this permission to him and to all my confessors, for he to whom this is being sent is one of them. And if they desire they may publish it while I am still alive that the world may no longer be deceived, for it thinks there is some good in me. And most certainly and truly I say, according to what I now know about myself, that their publishing this would give me great consolation.

As for what I say from here on, I do not give this permission; nor do I desire, if they should show it to someone, that they tell who it is who has experienced these things, or who has written this. As a result, I will not mention my name or the name of anyone else, but I will write everything as best I can so as to remain unknown, and this I ask for the love of God. These persons so learned and serious in mind will suffice for giving credibility to any good thing if the Lord gives me the grace to say it, because if it is good it will be His and not mine. For I am without learning or a good life, without instruction from a learned man or from any other person (for only those who commanded me to write this know that I am writing it, and at present they are not here), and almost stealing time, and regretfully because it prevents me from spinning and this is a poor house

with many things to be done. For even though the Lord may have given me greater capability and memory so that I might thereby have been able to profit from what I have heard or read, I have retained very little of it. Thus if I should say something good, the Lord wills it for some good; what is bad will be from me, and your Reverence will strike it out. Neither in the one instance nor in the other would there be any gain in my telling my name. It is clear that during my life no good should be said of me. After my death there would be no reason for doing so; but rather goodness would lose prestige, and no credit would be given to it for being said of so wretched and base a person.

8. And with the thought that your Reverence will do this that I'm asking you, for the love of the Lord, and that others who read it also will do so, I am writing freely. Otherwise I would have great scruples, with the exception of writing about my sins, for in such a matter I have no scruples. As for everything else, just being a woman is enough to have my wings fall off—how much more being both a woman and wretched as well. And thus what amounts to more than simply giving an account of my life, your Reverence may judge—since you so importuned that I write some statement about the favors granted me by God in prayer—as to its conformity with the truths of our holy Catholic faith. And if it should not be in conformity with them, your Reverence may burn it immediately, for I would submit to it being burned. And I shall speak of what is taking place in me so that when it is conformed to this faith, it may bring some profit to your Reverence; and if it is not, you will free my soul from illusion so that the devil may not be gaining where it seems to me that I am gaining. For the Lord well knows, as I shall afterward say,⁵ that I have always tried to find someone who would give me light.

9. As much as I desire to speak clearly about these matters of prayer, they will be really obscure for anyone who has not had experience. I'll speak of some things that as I understand them are obstacles to progress along this path and other things in which there is danger. These things I'll say from what the Lord has taught me through experience and through discussions with very learned men and persons who have lived the spiritual

life for many years. It will be seen that within only twenty-seven years in which I have practiced prayer His Majesty has given me the experience—along with my walking amid so many stumbling blocks and so poorly on this path—that for others took forty-seven or thirty-seven years; they journeyed in penance and always in virtue.

May His Majesty be blessed for everything and served by me on account of who He is. For my Lord knows well that in writing this I have no other aim than that He be praised and extolled a little when it is seen that in so filthy and malodorous a dunghap He should make a garden with so many delicate flowers. May His Majesty be pleased that through my own fault I do not pull them up again and let the garden return to what it was. I beg for the love of God that your Reverence pray for this since you know more clearly what I am than you have allowed me to tell here.

Chapter 11

Tells of the reason for the failure to reach the perfect love of God in a short time. Begins to explain through a comparison four degrees of prayer. Goes on to deal here with the first degree.¹ The doctrine is very beneficial for beginners and for those who do not have consolations in prayer.

WELL, LET US SPEAK NOW of those who are beginning to be servants of love. This doesn't seem to me to mean anything else than to follow resolutely by means of this path of prayer Him who has loved us so much. To be a servant of love is a dignity so great that it delights me in a wonderful way to think about it. For servile fear soon passes away if in this first state we proceed as we ought. O Lord of my soul and my good! When a soul is determined to love You by doing what it can to leave all and occupy itself better in this divine love, why don't You desire that it enjoy soon the ascent to the possession of perfect love? I have poorly expressed myself. I should have mentioned and complained that we ourselves do not desire this. The whole fault is ours if we don't soon reach the enjoy-

ment of a dignity so great, for the perfect attainment of this true love of God brings with it every blessing. We are so miserly and so slow in giving ourselves entirely to God that since His Majesty does not desire that we enjoy something as precious as this without paying a high price, we do not fully prepare ourselves.

2. I see clearly that there is nothing on earth with which one can buy so wonderful a blessing. But if we do what we can to avoid becoming attached to any earthly thing and let all our care and concern be with heavenly things, and if within a short time we prepare ourselves completely, as some of the saints did, I believe without a doubt that in a very short time this blessing will be given to us. But it seems to us that we are giving all to God, whereas the truth of the matter is that we are paying God the rent or giving Him the fruits and keeping for ourselves the ownership and the root. We resolve to be poor—and this is very meritorious—but then very often turn back to being anxious and diligent about possessing not only the necessities but superfluities as well and about winning friends who might provide these things for us. And we are thereby placed in a state of greater anxiety—and perhaps danger—about not being in want than we were before when we had our own possessions.

It also appears to us that we are renouncing our status when we become religious or that we renounce it when we begin to live a spiritual life and follow the path of perfection. No sooner is some little point of etiquette concerning our status brought up than we forget we have already offered it to God; and we desire to take it right back out of His hands, so to speak, after having made Him, as it seemed, the Lord of our wills. So it is with everything else.

3. What a charming way to seek the love of God! And then we desire it with our hands full, as they say. We have our attachments since we do not strive to direct our desires to a good effect and raise them up from the earth completely; but to have many spiritual consolations along with attachments is incongruous, nor does it seem to me that the two can get along together. Since we do not succeed in giving up everything at once, this treasure as a result is not given to us all at once. May it please the Lord that drop by drop He may give it to us, even

though it cost us all the trials in the world.

4. Indeed a great mercy does He bestow on anyone to whom He gives the grace and courage to resolve to strive for this good with every ounce of energy. For God does not deny Himself to anyone who perseveres. Little by little He will measure out the courage sufficient to attain this victory. I say “courage” because there are so many things the devil puts in the minds of beginners to prevent them in fact from starting out on this path. For he knows the damage that will be done to him in losing not only that one soul but many others. If beginners with the assistance of God struggle to reach the summit of perfection, I believe they will never go to heaven alone; they will always lead many people along after them. Like good captains they will give whoever marches in their company to God. The devil puts so many dangers and difficulties into the beginner’s head that no little courage, but a great deal, is necessary in order not to turn back—and a great deal of assistance from God.

5. Speaking now of the initial stages of those who are determined to seek out this good and embark on this enterprise (for I shall speak afterward of the other stages I began to mention in regard to mystical theology,² which I believe it is called), the greatest labor is in the beginning because it is the beginner who works while the Lord gives the increase. In the other degrees of prayer the greatest thing is enjoying; although whether in the beginning, the middle, or the end, all bear their crosses even though these crosses be different. For all who follow Christ, if they don’t want to get lost, must walk along this path that He trod. And blessed be the trials that even here in this life are so superabundantly repaid.

6. I shall have to make use of some comparison, although I should like to excuse myself from this since I am a woman and write simply what they ordered me to write. But these spiritual matters for anyone who like myself has not gone through studies are so difficult to explain. I shall have to find some mode of explaining myself, and it may be less often that I hit upon a good comparison. Seeing so much stupidity will provide some recreation for your Reverence.

It seems now to me that I read or heard of this comparison—for

since I have a bad memory, I don't know where or for what reason it was used,³ but it will be all right for my purposes. Beginners must realize that in order to give delight to the Lord they are starting to cultivate a garden on very barren soil, full of abominable weeds. His Majesty pulls up the weeds and plants good seed. Now let us keep in mind that all of this is already done by the time a soul is determined to practice prayer and has begun to make use of it. And with the help of God we must strive like good gardeners to get these plants to grow and take pains to water them so that they don't wither but come to bud and flower and give forth a most pleasant fragrance to provide refreshment for this Lord of ours. Then He will often come to take delight in this garden and find His joy among these virtues.

7. But let us see now how it must be watered so that we may understand what we have to do, the labor this will cost us, whether the labor is greater than the gain, and for how long it must last. It seems to me the garden can be watered in four ways. You may draw water from a well (which is for us a lot of work). Or you may get it by means of a water wheel and aqueducts in such a way that it is obtained by turning the crank of the water wheel. (I have drawn it this way sometimes—⁴the method involves less work than the other, and you get more water.) Or it may flow from a river or a stream. (The garden is watered much better by this means because the ground is more fully soaked, and there is no need to water so frequently—and much less work for the gardener.) Or the water may be provided by a great deal of rain. (For the Lord waters the garden without any work on our part—and this way is incomparably better than all the others mentioned.)

8. Now, then, these four ways of drawing water in order to maintain this garden—because without water it will die—are what are important to me and have seemed applicable in explaining the four degrees of prayer in which the Lord in His goodness has sometimes placed my soul. May it please His goodness that I manage to speak about them in a way beneficial for one of the persons⁵ who ordered me to write this, because within four months the Lord has brought him further than I got in seventeen years. This person has prepared himself better, and

so without any labor of his own the flower garden is watered with all these four waters, although the last is still not given except in drops. But he is advancing in such a way that soon he will be immersed in it, with the help of the Lord. And I shall be pleased if you laugh should this way of explaining the matter appear foolish.

9. Beginners in prayer, we can say, are those who draw water from the well. This involves a lot of work on their own part, as I have said. They must tire themselves in trying to recollect their senses. Since they are accustomed to being distracted, this recollection requires much effort. They need to get accustomed to caring nothing at all about seeing or hearing, to practicing the hours of prayer, and thus to solitude and withdrawal – and to thinking on their past life. Although these beginners and the others as well must often reflect upon their past, the extent to which they must do so varies, as I shall say afterward.⁶ In the beginning such reflection is even painful, for they do not fully understand whether or not they are repentant of their sins. If they are, they are then determined to serve God earnestly. They must strive to consider the life of Christ – and the intellect grows weary in doing this.

These are the things we can do of ourselves, with the understanding that we do so by the help of God, for without this help as is already known we cannot have so much as a good thought. These things make up the beginning of fetching water from the well, and please God that it may be found. At least we are doing our part, for we are already drawing it out and doing what we can to water these flowers. God is so good that when for reasons His Majesty knows – perhaps for our greater benefit – the well is dry and we, like good gardeners, do what lies in our power, He sustains the garden without water and makes the virtues grow. Here by “water” I am referring to tears and when there are no tears to interior tenderness and feelings of devotion.

10. But what will they do here who see that after many days there is nothing but dryness, distaste, vapidness, and very little desire to come to draw water? So little is the desire to do this that if they don’t recall that doing so serves and gives pleasure

to the Lord of the garden, and if they aren't careful to preserve the merits acquired in this service (and even what they hope to gain from the tedious work of often letting the pail down into the well and pulling it back up without any water), they will abandon everything. It will frequently happen to them that they will even be unable to lift their arms for this work and unable to get a good thought. This discursive work with the intellect is what is meant by fetching water from the well.

But, as I am saying, what will the gardener do here? He will rejoice and be consoled and consider it the greatest favor to be able to work in the garden of so great an Emperor! Since he knows that this pleases the Lord and his intention must be not to please himself but to please the Lord, he gives the Lord much praise. For the Master has confidence in the gardener because He sees that without any pay he is so very careful about what he was told to do. This gardener helps Christ carry the cross and reflects that the Lord lived with it all during His life. He doesn't desire the Lord's kingdom here below or ever abandon prayer. And so he is determined, even though this dryness may last for his whole life, not to let Christ fall with the cross. The time will come when the Lord will repay him all at once. He doesn't fear that the labor is being wasted. He is serving a good Master whose eyes are upon him. He doesn't pay any attention to bad thoughts. He considers that the devil also represented them to St. Jerome in the desert.⁷

11. These labors take their toll. Being myself one who endured them for many years (for when I got a drop of water from this sacred well I thought God was granting me a favor), I know that they are extraordinary. It seems to me more courage is necessary for them than for many other labors of this world. But I have seen clearly that God does not leave one, even in his life, without a large reward; because it is certainly true that one of those hours in which the Lord afterward bestowed on me a taste of Himself repaid, it seems to me, all the anguish I suffered in persevering for a long time in prayer.

I am of the opinion that to some in the beginning and to others afterward the Lord often desires to give these torments and the many other temptations that occur in order to try His lovers and

know whether they will be able to drink the chalice and help Him carry the cross before He lays great treasures within them. I believe His Majesty desires to bring us along this way for our own good so that we may understand well what little we amount to. The favors that come afterward are of such great worth that He desires first that before He gives them to us we see by experience our own worthlessness so that what happened to Lucifer will not happen to us.

12. My Lord, what do You do but that which is for the greater good of the soul You understand now to be Yours and which places itself in Your power so as to follow You wherever You go, even to death on the cross, and is determined to help You bear it and not leave You alone with it?

Those who see in themselves this determination have no reason, no reason whatsoever, to fear. Spiritual persons, you have no reason to be afflicted. Once you are placed in so high a degree as to desire to commune in solitude with God and abandon the pastimes of the world, the most has been done. Praise His Majesty for that and trust in His goodness who never fails His friends. Conceal from your eyes the thought about why He gives devotion to one after such a few days and not to me after so many years. Let us believe that all is for our own greater good. Let His Majesty lead the way along the path He desires. We belong no longer to ourselves but to Him. He grants us a great favor in wanting us to desire to dig in His garden and be in the presence of its Lord who certainly is present with us. Should He desire that for some these plants and flowers grow by the water they draw, which He gives from this well, and for others without it, what difference does that make to me? Do, Lord, what You desire. May I not offend You. Don't let the virtues be lost, if You only out of Your goodness have already given me some. I desire to suffer, Lord, since You suffered. Let Your will be done in me in every way, and may it not please Your Majesty that something as precious as Your love be given to anyone who serves you only for the sake of consolations.

13. It should be carefully noted—and I say this because I know it through experience—that the soul that begins to walk along this path of mental prayer with determination and that can suc-

ceed in paying little attention to whether this delight and tenderness is lacking or whether the Lord gives it (or to whether it has much consolation or no consolation) has travelled a great part of the way. However much it stumbles, it should not fear that it will turn back, because the building has been started on a solid foundation. This is true because the love of God does not consist in tears or in this delight and tenderness, which for the greater part we desire and find consolation in; but it consists in serving with justice and fortitude of soul and in humility. Without such service it seems to me we would be receiving everything and giving nothing.

14. In the case of a poor little woman like myself, weak and with hardly any fortitude, it seems to me fitting that God lead me with gifts, as He now does, so that I might be able to suffer some trials He has desired me to bear. But when I see servants of God, men of prominence, learning, and high intelligence make so much fuss because God doesn't give them devotion, it annoys me to hear them. I do not mean that they shouldn't accept it if God gives it, and esteem it, because then His Majesty sees that this is appropriate. But when they don't have devotion, they shouldn't weary themselves. They should understand that since His Majesty doesn't give it, it isn't necessary; and they should be masters of themselves. They should believe that their desire for consolation is a fault. I have experienced and seen this. They should believe it denotes imperfection together with a lack of freedom of spirit and the courage to accomplish something.

15. Although I lay great stress on this because it is very important that beginners have such freedom and determination, I am not saying it so much for beginners as for others. For there are many who begin, yet they never reach the end. I believe this is due mainly to a failure to embrace the cross from the beginning; thinking they are doing nothing, they become afflicted. When the intellect ceases to work, they cannot bear it. But it is then perhaps that their will is being strengthened and fortified, although they may not be aware of this.

We should think that the Lord is not concerned about these inabilities. Even though they seem to us to be faults, they are not. His Majesty already knows our misery and our wretched

nature better than we do ourselves, and He knows that these souls now desire to think of Him and love Him always. This determination is what He desires. The other affliction that we bring upon ourselves serves for nothing else than to disquiet the soul, and if it was incapable before of engaging in prayer for one hour, it will be so now for four. Very often this incapacity comes from some bodily disorder. I have a great deal of experience in this matter, and I know that what I say is true because I have considered it carefully and discussed it afterward with spiritual persons. We are so miserable that our poor little imprisoned soul shares in the miseries of the body; the changes in the weather and the rotating of the bodily humors often have the result that without their fault souls cannot do what they desire, but suffer in every way. If they seek to force themselves more during these times, the bad condition becomes worse and lasts longer. They should use discernment to observe when these bodily disorders may be the cause, and not smother the poor soul. They should understand that they are sick. The hour of prayer ought to be changed, and often this change will have to continue for some days. Let them suffer this exile as best they can. It is a great misfortune to a soul that loves God to see that it lives in this misery and cannot do what it desires because it has as wretched a guest as is this body.

16. I have said they should use discernment because sometimes the devil is the cause. And so it isn't always good to abandon prayer when there is great distraction and disturbance in the intellect just as it isn't always good to torture the soul into doing what it cannot do.

There are other exterior things like works of charity and spiritual reading, although at times it will not even be fit for these. Let it then serve the body out of love of God—because many other times the body serves the soul—and engage in some spiritual pastimes such as holy conversations, provided they are truly so, or going to the country, as the confessor might counsel. Experience is a great help in all, for it teaches what is suitable for us; and God can be served in everything. His yoke is easy,⁸ and it is very helpful not to drag the soul along, as they say, but to lead it gently for the sake of its greater advantage.

17. So I return to the advice—and even if I repeat it many times this doesn't matter—that it is very important that no one be distressed or afflicted over dryness or noisy and distracting thoughts. If people wish to gain freedom of spirit and not be always troubled, let them begin by not being frightened by the cross, and they will see how the Lord also helps them carry it and they will gain satisfaction and profit from everything. For, clearly, if the well is dry, we cannot put water into it. True, we must not become neglectful; when there is water we should draw it out because then the Lord desires to multiply the virtues by this means.

Chapter 12

Continues the discussion of this first stage. Tells about how far we can get, with the help of God, through our own efforts, and about the harm that results when the spirit desires to ascend to supernatural things before the Lord grants them.¹

WHAT I TRIED TO EXPLAIN in the previous chapters—although I digressed a great deal in speaking of other things since mentioning them seemed to me very necessary—was the work we can do through our own efforts and how in obtaining this initial devotion we can help ourselves in some way. For in thinking about and carefully examining what the Lord suffered for us, we are moved to compassion; and this sorrow and the resulting tears bring delight. In thinking about the glory we hope for, the love the Lord bore us, and His resurrection, we are moved to a joy that is neither entirely spiritual nor entirely of the senses. But the joy is virtuous and the sorrow very meritorious. Virtue and merit are found in all the things that cause the devotion acquired partly by the intellect, even though this devotion could not be merited or obtained if God did not give it. It is very good for a soul that hasn't gone beyond this point to refrain from striving to ascend further. This should be kept in mind, for otherwise the soul wouldn't make progress but would suffer harm.

2. In this state it can make many acts to awaken love, many resolutions to render God much service, and other acts in order to make the virtues grow, in accord with what is said in a book called *The Art of Serving God*,² which is a very good and appropriate book for those who are in this state in which the intellect is at work. The soul can place itself in the presence of Christ and grow accustomed to being inflamed with love for His sacred humanity. It can keep Him ever present and speak with Him, asking for its needs and complaining of its labors, being glad with Him in its enjoyments and not forgetting Him because of them, trying to speak to Him, not through written prayers but with words that conform to its desires and needs.

This is an excellent way of making progress, and in a very short time. I consider that soul advanced who strives to remain in this precious company and to profit very much by it, and who truly comes to love this Lord to whom we owe so much.

3. As a result, we shouldn't care at all about not having devotion — as I have said — but we ought to thank the Lord who allows us to be desirous of pleasing Him, even though our works may be weak. This method of keeping Christ present with us is beneficial in all stages and is a very safe means of advancing in the first degree of prayer, of reaching in a short time the second degree, and of walking secure against the dangers the devil can set up in the last degrees.

4. Keeping Christ present is what we of ourselves can do. Whoever would desire to pass beyond this point and raise the spirit to an experience of spiritual consolations that are not given would lose both the one and the other, in my opinion; for these consolations belong to the supernatural. And if the intellect is not active, the soul is left very dry, like a desert. Since this edifice is built entirely on humility, the closer one comes to God the more progress there must be in this virtue; and if there is no progress in humility, everything is going to be ruined. It seems a kind of pride to desire of ourselves to ascend higher since, in view of what we are, God does too much just in drawing us near to Himself.

It should not be thought that I am saying this about an ascent by means of reflection to the high things of heaven or of

God and of the grandeur that are there and of His great wisdom. I never reflected in this way, because I did not have the ability, as I said, and I was so wretched. Even in respect to thinking of earthly things, God gave me the favor to understand the truth that my reflecting on them would require no small amount of boldness, and how much more for heavenly things. Yet, other persons will draw profit from such reflection, especially if they have gone through studies. For in my opinion a background of studies is like a treasure to aid in this practice if the studies are accompanied by humility. Some days ago I saw the truth of this statement in the case of a few learned men.³ They began only a short time ago, and they have advanced very far. This makes me most anxious that many learned men would become spiritual men, as I shall say afterward.⁴

5. What I say about not ascending to God unless He raises one up is language of the spirit. He who has had some experience will understand me, for I don't know how to describe this being raised up if it isn't understood through experience. In mystical theology, which I began to describe,⁵ the intellect ceases to work because God suspends it, as I shall explain afterward if I know how and He gives me His help to do so. Taking it upon oneself to stop and suspend thought is what I mean should not be done; nor should we cease to work with the intellect, because otherwise we would be left like cold simpletons and be doing neither one thing nor the other. When the Lord suspends the intellect and causes it to stop, He Himself gives it that which holds its attention and makes it marvel; and without reflection it understands more in the space of a Creed than we can understand with all our earthly diligence in many years. Trying to keep the soul's faculties busy and thinking you can make them be quiet is foolish.

And I say again, even though it may not be understood, this effort to suspend the intellect is not very humble. Although there may be no fault, there is no lack of a penalty; labor will be wasted, and the soul will be left with some little frustration, as in the case of a person who when about to leap forward is pulled back by someone else. For now, seemingly, the soul has used its energy and finds that it hasn't achieved what it wanted to achieve with

it. And whoever desires to observe will see in the small gain that results this tiny lack of humility I mentioned. For humility has an excellent feature: when it is present in a work, that work does not leave in the soul a feeling of frustration.

It seems to me I have explained this matter, but perhaps I've made it clear only to myself. May the Lord by means of experience open the eyes of those who read this; no matter how little such experience may be, they will soon understand.

6. Many years passed by in which I read a lot of things and didn't understand anything of what I read. For a long time, even though God favored me, I didn't know what words to use to explain His favors; and this was no small trial. In a way amazing to me, His Majesty when He desires teaches me everything in a moment.

One thing I can truthfully say: although I spoke with many spiritual persons who wanted to explain what the Lord was giving me so that I would be able to speak about it, my dullness was truly so great that their explanations benefited me neither little nor much. Or maybe, since His Majesty has always been my Master, it was the Lord's desire that I have no one else to thank. May He be blessed forever because it is very disconcerting for me to speak in all truth about His favors. Without my desiring or asking (for in this matter of understanding these favors I have by no means been curious—it would have been a virtue to have been so—as I have been in regard to other vanities), God gave me in a moment completely clear understanding so that I knew how to explain His favor in a way that amazed me more than it did my confessors; for I understood better than they my own dullness. This clear understanding was given me a little while ago, and so what the Lord has not taught me I do not strive to know unless it be something touching upon matters of conscience.

7. Once again I counsel that it is very important for the spirit not to ascend unless the Lord raise it up. What this statement means is quite apparent. It would be especially bad for women to try to raise up the spirit because the devil would be able to cause some illusion; although I am certain the Lord would not allow any harm to come to someone who strives humbly to reach

Him. On the contrary, such a person would draw out more benefit and gain where the devil thought he could bring her to ruin.

Since this path of beginners is much travelled and the counsels I have given are very important, I have enlarged on them very much. They have been written of so much better by others, and I confess that I have written this with a great deal of embarrassment and shame although not with as much as I should have.

May God be blessed for everything, who desires and consents that someone like myself should speak about His graces, so lofty and so sublime.

Chapter 13

Continues with this first state and gives advice concerning some temptations the devil at times causes. The advice is very helpful.

IT HAS OCCURRED TO ME to speak about some temptations I have observed in beginners—I myself have had some—and to give certain advice that to me seems necessary.

Now strive in the beginning to walk in joy and freedom, for there are some persons who think their devotion will go away if they become a little distracted. It is good to walk in fear of self so as to avoid trusting oneself either little or much when entering into an occasion where God is usually offended. This fear is most necessary until we are whole in virtue. If a temptation comes from human nature, there are few who can consider themselves so strong as to be negligent. Always, as long as we live, even for the sake of humility, it is good to know our miserable nature. But, as I said,¹ there are many reasons why it is permitted to take recreation—even so as to be able to return with greater strength to prayer. Discretion is required in everything.

2. Have great confidence, for it is necessary not to hold back one's desires, but to believe in God that if we try we shall little by little, even though it may not be soon, reach the state the saints did with His help. For if they had never determined to

desire and seek this state little by little in practice they would never have mounted so high. His Majesty wants this determination, and He is a friend of courageous souls if they walk in humility and without trusting in self. I have not seen any cowardly soul or any of these who under the pretext of humility remain along the bottom of this path who do not take many years to advance as far as these courageous ones do in a few. I marvel at how important it is to be courageous in striving for great things along this path. For though the soul is not yet strong enough, it nonetheless takes flight and goes very high although like a little fledgling it soon tires and stops.

3. In the past I frequently kept in mind St. Paul's words that all things can be done in God. I understood clearly that of myself I couldn't do anything. Understanding this helped me very much; and also what St. Augustine says; *give me, Lord, what You command, and command what You desire*. I often thought that St. Peter didn't lose anything when he threw himself into the sea, even though he grew frightened afterward.² These first acts of determination are very important, although in this initial stage it is necessary to hold back a little and be bound by discretion and the opinion of a spiritual master. But souls should be careful that he isn't the kind that will teach them to be toads or that will be satisfied in merely showing them how to catch little lizards. Let humility always go first so as to understand that this strength does not come from ourselves.

4. But it is necessary that we know what this humility is like. I believe the devil harms people who practice prayer and prevents them from advancing by causing them to misunderstand humility. He makes it appear to us that it's pride to have great desires and want to imitate the saints and long to be martyrs. Then he tells us or causes us to think that since we are sinners the deeds of the saints are for our admiration, not our imitation. This I admit too. But we must distinguish what is to be admired from what is to be imitated. It wouldn't be good for weak and sickly people to take up much fasting and harsh penance and go off to desert places where they could neither sleep nor have anything to eat, or for them to do similar things. But we should think that we can with God's help strive to have great contempt for

the world, disesteem of honor, and detachment from our possessions. We have such stingy hearts that it seems to us we're going to lose the earth if we desire to neglect the body a little for the sake of the spirit. Then it seems to be a help toward recollection to be secure in the possession of necessities because concern about these necessities is a disturbance to prayer. It makes me sad that we have so little confidence in God and so much self love that these concerns should disturb us. And so it is that where the spirit is prospering as poorly as this a few trifles are as bad a trial to us as other trials caused by great and very important things. And yet in our judgment we presume that we are spiritual!

5. It seems to me now that this manner of procedure is a desire to reconcile body and soul so as to preserve one's rest here below and enjoy God up above. And if we walk in justice and cling to virtue, this will come about—but we would be advancing at the speed of a hen! Never in this way will one reach freedom of spirit. This is a very good way it seems to me for those who are in the married state and must live in conformity with their calling. But for the other state, in no way do I desire such kind of progress nor will anyone convince me it is good; for I have tried it; and I would never have moved if the Lord in His goodness had not taught me another shortcut.

6. Although in this matter of desires I have always had great ones, I strove for what I have mentioned:³ both to practice prayer and to live for my own pleasures. I believe that if I might have had someone to make me fly, I would have turned the desires into deeds more quickly. But on account of our sins, so few and so rare are the spiritual masters who are not excessively discreet in these matters that I believe it is one of the main reasons why beginners do not advance more rapidly to high perfection. For the Lord never fails, nor should He be blamed. We are the failures and miserable ones.

7. Also we can imitate the saints in seeking solitude and silence and many other virtues that will not kill these woeful bodies that seek so concertedly to take away these virtues in order to disconcert the soul; and the devil does a great deal to incapacitate us when he sees a little fear. He wants no more than to make

us think that everything is going to kill us and injure our health. Even tears, he causes us to think, will make us go blind. I went through this, and so I know. I don't understand what better sight or health we can desire than to lose them for a reason like this. Since I am so sickly, I was always tied down without being worth anything until I determined to pay no attention to the body or to my health. Now what I do doesn't amount to much; but since God desired that I understand this trick of the devil, who put the thought in my head that I would lose my health, I said: What difference does it make if I die; or at the thought of rest, I answered: I no longer need rest but the cross; and so with other thoughts. I have seen clearly that on very many occasions, even though I am in fact very sickly, that it was a temptation from the devil or from my own laziness—for afterward when I wasn't so cared for and pampered, I had much better health.

So it is very important in the initial stages of prayer not to be intimidated by thoughts; and believe me in this matter because I know it through experience. And that others might learn from my difficulties, I can even be of benefit to them by telling these faults of mine.

8. Another temptation is then very common. Since they begin to enjoy the serenity and gain that comes, they desire everyone else to be very spiritual. To desire this is not wrong. Striving to bring it about could have unhappy results if there is not a lot of discretion and simulation, doing so in such a way that one does not appear to be teaching. Whoever should have to work toward something beneficial in this area must have strong virtues so as not to give temptation to others.

This happened to me—and so I understand it—when, as I said,⁴ I strove to get others to practice prayer. Since on the one hand they heard me speak wonderful things about the great good contained in the practice of prayer and on the other hand they observed my great poverty in respect to the virtues, I believe I was a source of temptation and confusion for them. And with every reason! Afterward they finally told me they didn't know how the one was compatible with the other. And the reason for their considering what in itself was wrong to be all right was that they saw that I who they thought was good sometimes did it.

9. And this confusion is the work of the devil, for apparently he makes use of the good virtues we have to authorize as much as he can the evil he is pursuing. For, no matter how small it may be, when there is question of a community, he must gain readily—how much more in that the wrong I did was very great. As a matter of fact, in the course of many years only three profited from what I said to them.⁵ And later when the Lord had given me more strength in virtue, many profited within two or three years, as I shall afterward say.⁶ Moreover, there is another great disadvantage: a gradual backsliding on the part of the soul. The most we have to strive for in the beginning is to care for oneself alone and consider that there is nothing on earth but God and oneself—and this practice is very beneficial.

10. The devil tempts them in another way through distress over the sins and failings of others. (And all these temptations come from a zeal for virtue which it is necessary to understand and be careful about.) He puts it in their heads that this distress stems only from the desire that God not be offended and from concern for His honor; and next they seek a remedy. This desire disquiets them so much that it hinders their prayer; and the greatest harm lies in their thinking this distress amounts to virtue, perfection, and great zeal for God. I am not speaking about distress over the public sins of a Congregation—if they should become a common practice—or about the harm that comes to the Church from these heresies that give rise to the loss of so many souls. Such sorrow is very good; and since it is very good, it does not disquiet.

But the safe path for the soul that practices prayer will be not to bother about anything or anyone and to pay attention to itself and to pleasing God. This is important—ah, if I should have to speak of the mistakes I have seen happen by trusting in the good intention! But let us strive always to look at the virtues and good deeds we see in others and cover their defects with the thought of our own great sins. This is a manner of acting that, although we cannot do so with perfection right away, gradually gains for us a great virtue, that is: considering all others better than ourselves. In this way with the help of God one begins to acquire this virtue, for it is necessary in all things; and when

it is lacking, all our efforts are useless. Let us beseech Him to give us this virtue, for He will not refuse it to anyone who does his best.

11. This advice should be kept in mind also by those who reason a great deal with the intellect, deducing many ideas from one idea and working with concepts. Those like myself who cannot work with the intellect don't need any advice other than to be patient until the Lord gives them light and something to be occupied with. These persons can do so little with their intellects by themselves that any other counsel would hinder them rather than help them.

But returning to those who practice discursive reflection, I say they should not pass the whole time thinking. For, although discursive reflection is very meritorious, they don't seem to realize that since their prayer is delightful there should ever be a Sunday or a time in which one is not working; but they think such time is lost. I consider this loss a great gain. But, as I have said,⁷ they should put themselves in the presence of Christ and, without tiring the intellect, speak with and delight in Him and not wear themselves out in composing syllogisms; rather, they should show Him their needs and the reason why He doesn't have to allow us to be in His presence. The discursive reflection they can do at one time, and the other acts at another, so that the soul may not grow tired of always eating the same food. These acts are very delightful and helpful if one's taste becomes accustomed to them. They contain a great amount of sustenance giving the soul life and many benefits.

12. I want to explain myself further because these matters concerning prayer are all difficult and if one doesn't find a master for himself, they are very hard to understand. As a result, even though I want to be brief and just touching upon them is enough for someone with good intelligence (like the one who ordered me to write about these matters of prayer), my dullness of mind does not allow me to explain in a few words something it is so important to explain well. For since I suffered so much, I pity those who begin solely with books because it is strange how different what one understands is from what one afterward sees through experience.

But to return to what I was saying:⁸ let us begin to think about an episode of the Passion, let's say of when our Lord was bound to the pillar. The intellect goes in search of reasons for better understanding the great sorrows and pain His Majesty suffered in that solitude and many other things that the intellect, if it works hard, can herein deduce. How much more if it is the intellect of a learned man! This is the method of prayer with which all must begin, continue, and finish; and it is a very excellent and safe path until the Lord leads one to other supernatural things.

13. I say "all," but there are many souls that benefit more by other meditations than those on the sacred Passion. For just as there are many mansions in heaven,⁹ there are many paths. Some persons find it helpful to think about hell, others about death; some if they have tender hearts experience much fatigue if they always think about the Passion, and they are refreshed and helped by considering the power and grandeur of God in creatures—and the love He bore us, and its manifestation in all things. This is an admirable method of procedure as long as one often reflects on the Passion and life of Christ from which has come and continues to come every good.

14. Beginners need counsel so as to see what helps them most. For this reason a master is very necessary providing he has experience. If he doesn't, he can be greatly mistaken and lead a soul without understanding it nor allowing it to understand itself. For since it sees that there is great merit in being subject to a master, it doesn't dare depart from what he commands it. I have come upon souls intimidated and afflicted for whom I felt great pity because the one who taught them had no experience; and there was one person who didn't know what to do with herself. Since they do not understand spiritual things, these masters afflict soul and body and obstruct progress. One of these souls spoke to me about a master who held her bound for eight years and wouldn't let her go beyond self knowledge; the Lord had already brought her to the prayer of quiet, and so she suffered much tribulation.

15. This path of self knowledge must never be abandoned, nor is there on this journey a soul so much a giant that it has

no need to return often to the stage of an infant and a suckling. And this should never be forgotten. Perhaps I shall speak of it more often¹⁰ because it is very important. There is no stage of prayer so sublime that it isn't necessary to return often to the beginning. Along this path of prayer, self knowledge and the thought of one's sins is the bread with which all palates must be fed no matter how delicate they may be; they cannot be sustained without this bread. It must be eaten within bounds, nonetheless. Once a soul sees that it is now submissive and understands clearly that it has nothing good of itself and is aware both of being ashamed before so great a King and of repaying so little of the great amount it owes Him—what need is there to waste time here? We must go on to other things that the Lord places before us; and there is no reason to leave them aside, for His Majesty knows better than we what is fitting for us to eat.

16. So it is very important that the master have prudence—I mean that he have good judgment—and experience; if besides these he has learning, so much the better. But if one cannot find these three qualifications together, the first two are more important since men with a background in studies can be sought out and consulted when there is need. I say that if these learned men do not practice prayer their learning is of little help to beginners. I do not mean that beginners shouldn't consult learned men, for I would rather a spirit without prayer than one that has not begun to walk in truth. Also, learning is a great thing because learned men teach and enlighten us who know little; and, when brought before the truths of Sacred Scripture, we do what we ought. May God deliver us from foolish devotions.

17. I want to explain myself further, for I believe I'm getting mixed up in many things. I've always had this fault of not knowing how to explain myself, as I have said,¹¹ except at the cost of many words. A nun begins to practice prayer. If a foolish and whimsical person is directing her, he will explain that it is better for her to obey him than her superior. He does this without malice but thinks he is doing right, because if he is not a religious, such advice will seem to be good. And when dealing with matters in the home if the person is a married woman, he will tell her that it is better to remain in prayer even if it displeases her

husband. Thus he doesn't know how to arrange time or things so that they be conformed to truth. Since he lacks the light himself, he doesn't know how to enlighten others even though he may want to do so. And although it seems that learning is not necessary for such knowledge, my opinion has always been and will be that every Christian strive to speak if possible with someone who has gone through studies; and the more learned the person the better. Those who walk the path of prayer have a greater need for this counsel; and the more spiritual they are, the greater their need.

18. Let not the spiritual person be misled by saying that learned men without prayer are unsuitable for those who practice it. I have consulted many learned men because for some years now, on account of a greater necessity, I have sought them out more; and I've always been a friend of men of learning. For though some don't have experience, they don't despise the Spirit nor do they ignore it, because in Sacred Scripture, which they study, they always find the truth of the good spirit. I hold that the devil will not deceive with illusions the person of prayer who consults learned men, unless this person wants to be deceived, because the devils have a tremendous fear of that learning which is accompanied by humility and virtue; and they know they will be discovered and go away with a loss.

19. I have said this because there are opinions going around¹² that learned men if they are not spiritual are no help to people who practice prayer. I have already said that it is necessary to have a spiritual master; but if he is not a learned man, this lack of learning will be a hindrance. It will be a great help to consult with learned men. If they are virtuous even though they may not experience spiritual things, they will benefit me; and God will enable them to explain what they must teach—He will even give them spiritual experience so that they might help us. I do not say this without having experienced it, and it has happened to me with more than two. I say that if individuals are going to submit completely to only one master, they would be greatly mistaken if they did not seek one like this since if he is a religious he must be subject to his superior. For perhaps the master will be lacking all the three qualities ¹³ of

a good master, which will be no small cross, especially if the soul is unwilling to submit to one with poor judgment. At least I haven't been able to submit in this way myself; nor do I think such submission is fitting. But those who belong to the laity, let them praise God that they can choose someone to whom they may be subject and not lose this very virtuous freedom. Let them, however, postpone having a master until a suitable person is found, for the Lord will provide one on the condition that all is founded upon humility and the desire to do the right thing. I praise God greatly, and women and those who haven't gone through studies must always be infinitely grateful to Him that there be someone who by means of so many labors has attained that truth which ignorant people don't know.

20. I often marvel thinking about learned men, religious especially, who after the labor it cost them to acquire their knowledge use it to help me for nothing more than my asking them — and that there are persons who don't want to benefit from this labor! May God never allow this to happen! I see these men subject to the hardships of religious life, which are great, with its penances and bad food, subject to obedience — so that often it puts me to shame, certainly; then together with all this, the lack of sleep; everything a trial, everything a cross. It seems to me it would be a great wrong to lose so much good through one's own fault. And it may be that some of us who are free of these hardships and receive this knowledge already prepared and served, as they say, and living as we please, think that just because we spend a little more time in prayer, we merit more than those who have undergone so many labors.

21. May You be blessed, Lord, who have made me so unable and unprofitable! But I praise You very much because You awaken so many to awaken us. Our prayer for those who give us light should be unceasing. In the midst of tempests as fierce as those the Church now endures, what would we be without them? If some have gone bad, the good ones shine more brilliantly. May it please the Lord to keep them in His hands and help them so that they might help us, amen.

22. I have wandered greatly from the subject I began to speak about. But everything is a subject for beginners that their journey

on so lofty a road might begin on the true road. Now returning to what I was saying about Christ bound at the pillar: it is good to reflect awhile and think about the pains He suffered there, and why, and who He is, and the love with which He suffered them. But one should not always weary oneself in seeking these reflections but just remain there in His presence with the intellect quiet. And if we are able we should occupy ourselves in looking at Christ who is looking at us, and we should speak, and petition, and humble ourselves, and delight in the Lord's presence, and remember that we are unworthy of being there. When we can do this, even though it may be at the beginning of prayer, we will derive great benefit; and this manner of prayer has many advantages—at least my soul derived them.

I don't know if I have been successful in speaking about this. Your Reverence will be the judge. May it please the Lord that I succeed in always giving Him pleasure, amen.

Chapter 14

Begins to explain the second degree of prayer in which the Lord now starts to give the soul a more special kind of delight. Explains how this experience is supernatural. This matter is worth noting.

IT HAS BEEN EXPLAINED now how the garden is watered by labor and the use of one's arms, drawing the water up from the well. Let us speak now of the second manner, ordained by the Lord of the garden, for getting water; that is, by turning the crank of a water wheel and by aqueducts, the gardener obtains more water with less labor; and he can rest without having to work constantly. Well, this method applied to what they call the prayer of quiet is what I now want to discuss.

2. Here the soul begins to be recollected and comes upon something supernatural because in no way can it acquire this prayer through any efforts it may make. True, at one time it seemingly got tired turning the crank, and working with the intellect, and filling the aqueducts. But here the water is higher, and so the labor is much less than that required in pulling it

up from the well. I mean that the water is closer because grace is more clearly manifest to the soul.

In this prayer the faculties are gathered within so as to enjoy that satisfaction with greater delight. But they are not lost, nor do they sleep. Only the will is occupied in such a way that, without knowing how, it becomes captive; it merely consents to God allowing Him to imprison it as one who well knows how to be the captive of its lover. O Jesus and my Lord! How valuable is Your love to us here! It holds our love so bound that it doesn't allow it the freedom during that time to love anything else but You.

3. The other two faculties help the will to be capable of enjoying so much good — although sometimes it happens that even though the will is united, they are very unhelpful. But then it shouldn't pay any attention to them; rather it should remain in its joy and quietude. Because if the will desires to gather in these faculties, they both get lost. They are like doves that are dissatisfied with the food the owner of the dovecot gives them without their having to work. They go to look for food elsewhere, but they find it so scarce that they return. And thus these faculties go away and then come back to see if the will might give them what it enjoys. If the Lord desires to throw them some food, they stop; and if not, they return to their search. And they must think they are benefiting the will; and sometimes in desiring the memory or imagination to represent to the will what they're enjoying, they do the will harm. Well, then, be advised to behave toward them as I shall explain.¹

4. All this that takes place here brings with it the greatest consolation and with so little labor that prayer does not tire one, even though it lasts for a long while. The intellect's work here is very slow-paced, and it obtains a lot more water than it pulled out of the well. The tears God gives are now accompanied by joy; however, although they are experienced, there is no striving for them.

5. This water of great blessings and favors that the Lord gives here makes the virtues grow incomparably better than in the previous degree of prayer, for the soul is now ascending above its misery and receiving a little knowledge of the delights of glory.

This water I believe makes the virtues grow better and also brings the soul much closer to the true Virtue, which is God, from whence come all the virtues. His Majesty is beginning to communicate Himself to this soul, and He wants it to experience how He is doing so.

In arriving here it begins soon to lose its craving for earthly things—and little wonder! It sees clearly that one moment of the enjoyment of glory cannot be experienced here below, neither are there riches, or sovereignties, or honors, or delights that are able to provide a brief moment of that happiness, for it is a true happiness that, it is seen, satisfies us. In earthly things it would seem to me a marvel were we ever to understand just where we can find this satisfaction, for there is never lacking in these earthly things both the “yes” and the “no.” During the time of this prayer, everything is “yes.” The “no” comes afterward upon seeing that the delight is ended and that one cannot recover it—nor does one know how. Were one to crush self with penances and prayer and all the rest, it would profit little if the Lord did not desire to give this delight. God in His greatness desires that this soul understand that He is so close it no longer needs to send Him messengers but can speak with Him itself and not by shouting since He is so near that when it merely moves its lips, He understands it.

6. It seems impertinent to say this since we know that God always understands us and is with us. There is no doubt about this understanding and presence. But our Emperor and Lord desires that in this prayer we know that He understands us, and what His presence does, and that He wants to begin to work in the soul in a special way. All of this that the Lord desires is manifest in the great interior and exterior satisfaction He gives the soul and in the difference there is, as I said,² between this delight and happiness and the delights of earth, for this delight seems to fill the void that through our sins we have caused in the soul. This satisfaction takes place in its very intimate depths, and the soul doesn’t know where the satisfaction comes from or how, nor frequently does it know what to do or what to desire or what to ask for. It seems it has found everything at once and doesn’t know what it has found.

Nor do I know how to explain this experience because for so many things learning is necessary. Here it would be helpful to explain well the difference between a general and a particular grace — for there are many who are ignorant of this difference — and how the Lord desires that the soul in this prayer almost see with its own eyes, as they say, this particular grace. Learning is also required to explain many other things, which I perhaps did not express correctly. But since what I say is going to be checked by persons who will recognize any error, I'm not worrying about it. In matters of theology as well as in those of the spirit I know that I can be mistaken; yet, since this account will end in good hands, these learned men will understand and remove what is erroneous.

7. Still, I should like to explain this experience because we are dealing with beginners; and when the Lord begins to grant these favors, the soul itself doesn't understand them nor does it know what to do with itself. For if the Lord leads it along the path of fear, as He did me, it is a great trial if there is no one to understand it. To see itself described brings it intense joy, and then it sees clearly the path it is walking on. It is a great good to know what one must do in order to advance in any of these stages. For I have suffered much and have lost a great deal of time for not knowing what to do, and I pity souls greatly who find themselves alone when they arrive at this stage. Even though I have read many spiritual books and they touch upon the relevant points, the explanations are brief; and if the soul is not very experienced, even were the explanations ample, it would have a hard time understanding itself.

8. I desire very much that the Lord help me explain the effects caused in the soul by these things that are now beginning to be supernatural so that through the effects one may know when they are the work of God's spirit. I say "one may know," but I mean in conformity with what one can know here below. It is always good that we walk with fear and caution. For, although the work may be from God, the devil at times can transform himself into an angel of light; and if the soul has not a great deal of experience, it will not discern the devil's work — and, in fact, it must have so much experience that it needs to come close

to the very summit of prayer in order to have such discernment.

The little time at my disposal is little help to me and so His Majesty must come to my aid. I have to follow the community life and have many other duties since I am in a house which is just beginning,³ as will be seen afterward. As a result, I write without the time and calm for it, and bit by bit. I should like to have time, because when the Lord gives the spirit, things are put down with ease and in a much better way. Putting them down is then like copying a model you have before your eyes. But if the spirit is lacking, it is more difficult to speak about these things than to speak Arabic,⁴ as the saying goes, even though many years may have been spent in prayer. As a result, it seems to me most advantageous to have this experience while I am writing, because I see clearly that it is not I who say what I write; for neither do I plan it with the intellect nor do I know afterward how I managed to say it. This often happens to me.

9. Let us now return to our garden and see how these trees are beginning to bud so as to blossom and afterward give fruit—and also the flowers and carnations so as to give forth their fragrance. This comparison has its charm for me because often in my beginnings (and, please the Lord, I may have now begun to serve His Majesty; I mean the beginnings of what I shall say from here on about my life) it was a great delight for me to consider my soul as a garden and reflect that the Lord was taking His walk in it. I begged Him to increase the fragrance of the little flowers of virtue that were beginning to bloom, so it seemed, and that they might give Him glory and He might sustain them since I desired nothing for myself—and that He might cut the ones He wanted, for I already knew that better ones would flower. I say “cut” because there are times when the soul has no thought of this garden. Everything seems to be dry, and it seems there is not going to be any water to sustain it—nor does it appear that there has ever been in the soul anything of virtue. It undergoes much tribulation because the Lord desires that it seem to the poor gardener that everything acquired in watering and keeping the garden up is being lost. This dryness amounts to an authentic weeding and pulling up of the remaining bad growth by its roots, no matter how small it may be. By knowing that

there is no diligence that suffices if God takes away the water of grace and by placing little value on the nothing that we are, and even less than nothing, the soul gains much humility. The flowers begin to grow again.

10. O my Lord and my God! I cannot say this without tears and great joy of soul! How You desire, Lord, thus to be with us and to be present in the Sacrament (for in all truth this can be believed since it is so, and in the fullness of truth we can make this comparison); and if it were not for our fault, we could rejoice in being with You, and You would be glad to be with us since You say that Your delight is to be with the children of the earth.⁵ O my Lord! What is this? As often as I hear these words, they bring me great consolation; they did so even when I was very far gone. Is it possible, Lord, that there be a soul that reaches the point where You bestow similar favors and gifts, and understands that You are to be with it, that goes back to offending You after so many favors and after such striking demonstrations of the love You have for it which cannot be doubted since the effects of it are obvious? Yes, there certainly is one, and not one who has done this once but done it many times—for it is I. And may it please your goodness, Lord, that I might be the only ungrateful one and the only one who has done such terrible evil and shown such excessive ingratitude. But even from this evil, Your infinite goodness has drawn out something worth-while; and the greater the evil, the more resplendent the wonder of Your mercies. And how many are the reasons I can sing Your mercies forever!

11. I beseech You, my God, that it may be so and that I may sing them without end since You have deigned to bestow upon me mercies so outstanding they amaze those who see them; and as for me, they frequently carry me out of myself to praise You the better. By remaining in myself without You, I could do nothing, my Lord, but return to cutting the garden flowers in such a way that this miserable ground would once more serve for a trash heap as it did previously. Do not permit it, Lord, or desire the loss of the soul You bought with so many labors and which You have so often gone back again to rescue and save from the teeth of the terrifying dragon.

12. May your Reverence pardon me,⁶ for I have gone off the subject; and don't be surprised, because in speaking about myself I am dealing with my feelings, and therefore it is often very difficult to resist continuing to proclaim the praises of God as I put down in writing the many things I owe Him. And I don't think these praises will cause displeasure to your Reverence, for we both, it seems to me, can sing the same thing even though in a different way—because what I owe God is much more since He has pardoned me more,⁷ as your Reverence knows.

Chapter 15

Continues on the same subject and gives some advice about how to act in this prayer of quiet. Discusses the fact that many souls reach this prayer but few pass beyond. Knowledge of the things touched on here is very necessary and beneficial.

NOW LET'S RETURN TO THE SUBJECT. This quietude and recollection is something that is clearly felt through the satisfaction and peace bestowed on the soul, along with great contentment and calm and a very gentle delight in the faculties. It seems to the soul, since it hasn't gone further, that there's nothing left to desire and that it should willingly say with St. Peter that it will make its dwelling there.¹ It dares not move or stir, for it seems that good will slip through its hands—nor would it even want to breathe sometimes. The poor little thing doesn't understand that since by its own efforts it can do nothing to draw that good to itself, so much less will it be able to keep it for longer than the Lord desires.

I have already mentioned that in this first recollection and quiet the soul's faculties do not cease functioning. But the soul is so satisfied with God that as long as the recollection lasts, the quiet and calm are not lost since the will is united with God even though the two faculties are distracted; in fact, little by little the will brings the intellect and the memory back to recollection. Because even though the will may not be totally absorbed, it is so well occupied, without knowing how, that no matter what

efforts the other two faculties make, they cannot take away its contentment and joy. But rather with hardly any effort the will is gradually helped so that this little spark of love of God may not go out.

2. May it please His Majesty to give me grace to explain this state well because there are many, many souls who reach it but few that pass beyond; and I don't know whose fault it is. Most surely God does not fail, for once His Majesty has granted a soul the favor of reaching this stage, I don't believe He will fail to grant it many more favors unless through its own fault.

It is very important that the soul reaching this stage realize the great dignity of its state and the great favor the Lord has bestowed on it and how with good reason it must not belong to the earth because it now seems His goodness will make it a citizen of heaven, provided it doesn't stop through its own fault; and unhappy it will be if it turns back. I think turning back would mean falling to the bottom, as I was doing, if the mercy of the Lord hadn't rescued me. For the most part, in my opinion, this turning back will come through serious faults; nor is it possible to leave so much good without the blindness caused by much evil.

3. Thus, for the love of the Lord, I beg those whom His Majesty has so highly favored in the attainment of this state that they understand it and esteem it with a humble and holy confidence so as not to return to the fleshpots of Egypt.² If through weakness and wickedness and a miserable nature they should fall, as I did, let them keep ever in mind the good they have lost and be suspicious and walk with the fear—for they are right in doing so—that if they don't return to prayer, they will go from bad to worse. What I call a true fall is abhorrence of the path by which one gained so much good; and to these souls I am speaking. For I am not saying that they should never offend God or fall into sin, although it would be right for anyone who has begun to receive these favors to be very much on guard against sinning; but we are miserable creatures. What I advise strongly is not to abandon prayer, for in prayer people will understand what they are doing and win repentance from the Lord and fortitude to lift themselves up. And you must believe that if you give up prayer, you are, in my opinion, courting danger. I don't

know if I understand what I'm saying because, as I said,³ I'm judging by myself.

4. This prayer, then, is a little spark of the Lord's true love which He begins to enkindle in the soul; and He desires that the soul grow in the understanding of what this love accompanied by delight is. For anyone who has experience, it is impossible not to understand soon that this little spark cannot be acquired. Yet, this nature of ours is so eager for delights that it tries everything; but it is quickly left cold because however much it may desire to light the fire and obtain this delight, it doesn't seem to be doing anything else than throwing water on it and killing it. If this quietude and recollection and little spark is from God's spirit and not a delight given by the devil or procured by ourselves, it will be noticed no matter how small it is. And if we don't extinguish it through our own fault, it is what will begin to enkindle the large fire that (as I shall mention in its place)⁴ throws forth flames of the greatest love of God which His Majesty gives to perfect souls.

5. This little spark is the sign or the pledge God gives to this soul that He now chooses it for great things if it will prepare itself to receive them. This spark is a great gift, much more so than I can express.

As I say,⁵ I know many souls that reach this stage, but to me it is a terrible pity that those that pass beyond, as they should, are so few I am ashamed to mention it. I do not mean there are few; there must be many, for there must be some reason why God allows us to live. I am speaking from what I have seen. I should very much like to advise these souls to be careful not to hide the talent⁶ since it seems God desires to choose them to bring profit to many others, especially in these times when staunch friends of God are necessary to sustain the weak. And those who are aware of this favor within themselves may consider that they are such friends if they know how to respond according to the laws that even a good friendship in the world demands; otherwise, as I said,⁷ they should be fearful lest they bring evil upon themselves—and please God it would then fall only upon themselves!

6. What the soul must do during these times of quiet amounts

to no more than proceeding gently and noiselessly. What I call noise is running about with the intellect looking for many words and reflections so as to give thanks for this gift and piling up one's sins and faults in order to see that the gift is unmerited. Everything is motion here; the intellect is representing, and the memory hurrying about. For certainly these faculties tire me out from time to time; and although I have a poor memory, I cannot subdue it. The will calmly and wisely must understand that one does not deal well with God by force and that our efforts are like the careless use of large pieces of wood which smother this little spark. One should realize this and humbly say: "Lord, what am I capable of here? What has the servant to do with the Lord—or earth with heaven?" Or other words that at this time come to mind out of love and well grounded in the knowledge that what is said is the truth. And one should pay no attention to the intellect, for it is a grinding mill. The will may desire to share what it enjoys or may work to recollect the intellect, for often it will find itself in this union and calm while the intellect wanders about aimlessly. It is better that the will leave the intellect alone than go after it, and that it remain like a wise bee in the recollection and in enjoyment of that gift. For if no bee were to enter the beehive and each were employed in going after the other, no honey could be made.

7. As a result, the soul will lose a great deal if it isn't careful in this matter, especially if the intellect is keen. For when the soul begins to compose speeches and search for ideas, though insignificant, it will think it is doing something if they are well expressed. The idea it should have here is a clear understanding that there isn't any idea that will make God give us so great a favor but that this favor comes only from His goodness; and it should be aware that we are very near His Majesty and ask for His gifts and pray for the Church and for those who have asked for our prayers and for the souls in purgatory, not with the noise of words but with longing that He hear us. This is a kind of prayer that includes many things and in which more is obtained than through a great deal of reflection by the intellect. Let the will awaken within itself some spontaneous considerations verifying its progress so as to quicken this love, and let

it make some loving acts about what it will do for one to whom it owes so much without, as I said,⁸ admitting noise from the intellect which goes about looking for great concepts. In fact, a little straw put there with humility—and it will be less than a straw if we put it on ourselves—will serve the purpose and help more to enkindle the fire than a lot of wood along with much learned reasoning. These, in our opinion, would smother the spark within the space of a Creed.

This advice is good for the learned men who ordered me to write. For, through the goodness of God, all may reach this prayer; and it may happen that these learned men will pass the time in making scriptural applications. Although their studies will not cease to benefit them a lot before and afterward, here during these periods of prayer there is little need for learning, in my opinion; rather, their studies will make the will tepid. For in seeing itself near the light, the intellect then has the greatest clarity; and I, though being what I am, seem to be another person.

8. And, in fact, it has happened to me that while in this quietude, and understanding hardly anything of the Latin prayers, especially of the psalter, I have not only understood how to render the Latin verse in the vernacular but have gone beyond to rejoicing in the meaning of the verse.

I am not speaking of those who have to preach or teach, for in that case it is good to take advantage of those studies so as to aid the poor ones who, like myself, have little knowledge. Charity in helping souls is always a great thing, provided this help is given for God alone.

Therefore, in these times of quietude, let the soul remain in its repose; let them put their learning to one side. The time will come when it will be useful for the Lord; they should esteem it so that they do not desire to abandon it for any treasure but to use it only to serve His Majesty, for it is very helpful. Believe me, in the presence of infinite Wisdom, a little study of humility and one act of humility is worth more than all the knowledge of the world. Here there is no demand for reasoning but for knowing what as a matter of fact we are and for placing ourselves (with simplicity) in God's presence, for He desires the soul to

become ignorant in His presence, as indeed it is. His Majesty humbles Himself so much that He allows us to be near Him in spite of what we are.

9. The intellect is also stirred to compose prayers of thanksgiving; but the will, calmly, without daring to raise its eyes, like the publican,⁹ gives better thanks than the intellect can perhaps express with all its rhetorical artifices. Finally, at this stage one doesn't have to renounce completely discursive mental prayer or the use of some words, or even vocal prayers if there should be the desire or ability; if the quiet is great, it is difficult to speak without a good deal of effort.

We can discern, in my opinion, whether this quiet comes from the spirit of God or whether we procure it ourselves once God begins to give devotion and we, as I said,¹⁰ want to pass on to the quiet through our own efforts. When we procure the quiet ourselves, it produces no effect, quickly goes away, and leaves behind aridity.

10. If the quiet is from the devil, I think an experienced soul will recognize this because it results in disturbance and a lack of humility and of preparation for the effects which the prayer coming from God produces. It doesn't leave light in the intellect or constancy in truth. The devil can do little harm or none at all if the soul directs to God the delight and sweetness it feels and fixes its thoughts and desires upon Him, as was advised. The devil can't gain anything; rather, God will permit that the devil, by means of the very delight he causes in the soul, will lose much. For this delight will prompt the soul — since it thinks God gives the delight — to return often to prayer with longing for the Lord. And if it is a humble soul and not inquisitive or concerned about delights, even though they be spiritual, but a friend of the cross, it will pay little attention to the consolation given by the devil. It will be unable to pay little attention to the consolation coming from the spirit of God but will highly esteem it. But anything the devil gives is like himself; a total lie. When the devil sees that in this consolation the soul humbles itself (for in this experience it must have much humility, as in all matters of prayer), he will not return often, because he sees his loss.

11. For this reason and many others, I counselled in dealing

with the first mode of prayer, the first water,¹¹ that it is an important matter for beginners in prayer to start off by becoming detached from every kind of satisfaction and to enter the path solely with the determination to help Christ carry the cross like good cavaliers, who desire to serve their king at no salary since their salary is certain. We should fix our eyes on the true and everlasting kingdom which we are trying to gain. It is very important to keep this kingdom always in mind, especially in the beginning. For afterward it is seen so clearly that rather than striving to keep remembering the short time everything lasts and how everything is nothing and how rest should be considered no more than a trifle, it is necessary to forget these things in order to live.

12. It seems this is a very poor way of thinking—and so it is. For those who are advanced in perfection would consider it an affront and would be ashamed if they thought they should give up the good things of this world because these things will come to an end; even if these things were to last forever, advanced souls would be happy to renounce them for God. And the more perfect these souls are, the happier they would be; and the longer the things last, still happier would they be. For here in these souls love has now increased, and it is love that is at work. But for beginners this advice is most important, and they should not hold it in little esteem, for what is obtained is a great good—and that is why I give this advice so strongly. This advice will even be necessary sometimes for those who have reached a very exalted prayer when God desires to try them and when it seems that His Majesty is abandoning them. As I already said,¹² and I wouldn't want this to be forgotten, in this life the soul doesn't grow like the body, even though we say it grows—and in fact it does. After a child grows up and develops a strong body and becomes an adult, the body doesn't dwindle and grow small again. But in the case of the soul, the Lord desires this to happen, according to what I have seen for myself; for otherwise I wouldn't know. The purpose must be to humiliate us for our own great good and so that we might not become careless while in this exile, since the one who goes highest must fear the most and trust the less in self. There come times when it is

necessary for these souls to protect themselves from offending God. Their wills are so fixed in His that rather than commit an imperfection, they would allow themselves to be tormented and would suffer a thousand deaths. But since they are attacked by temptations and persecutions, it becomes necessary, in order to avoid sin, to make use of prayer's first weapons and return to the thought that everything will end and that there is a heaven and a hell and other things of this sort.

13. Well, returning to what I was saying,¹³ a solid foundation for the protection of oneself from the tricks and consolations coming from the devil is to begin with the determination to follow the way of the cross and not desire consolations, since the Lord Himself pointed out this way of perfection saying: *take up your cross and follow me*.¹⁴ He is our model; whoever follows His counsels solely for the sake of pleasing Him has nothing to fear.

14. In the progress they observe in themselves they will know that the devil is not the cause if, even though they fall again, there remains a sign that the Lord was present in their prayer: and it is that they rise again quickly. There are other signs as well which I shall now mention. When the prayer comes from God's spirit, there is no need to go dredging up things in order to derive some humility and shame because the Lord Himself gives this prayer in a manner very different from that which we gain through our nice little reasonings. For such humility is nothing in comparison with the true humility the Lord with His light here teaches and which causes an embarrassment that undoes one. It is well known that God gives a knowledge that makes us realize we have no good of ourselves; and the greater the favors, the greater is this knowledge. He bestows a strong desire to advance in prayer and not abandon it no matter what trial may come upon one. The soul offers itself up in all things. It feels sure, while still being humble and fearing, that it will be saved. He casts out from it all servile fear and grants a more mature trusting fear. It is aware of the beginning of a love of God that has much less self-interest. It desires periods of solitude in order to enjoy that good more.

15. In sum, so as not to tire myself, this prayer of quiet is

the beginning of all blessings. The flowers are already at the point in which hardly anything is lacking for them to bud; and the soul sees this very clearly. In no way is it able to believe at that time that God is not with it. When it sees again the cracks and imperfections in itself, it then fears everything. And it is good that it is fearful, although there are some souls that profit more by believing that this prayer comes certainly from God than by all the fears possible. For if by nature someone is loving and grateful, the memory of the favor God has granted does more to bring such a person back to God than all the infernal punishments imaginable. At least this happened in my case, even though I am so wretched.

16. Because the signs of the good spirit will be mentioned as I go along and it is so difficult for me to explain them well, I won't speak of them now. I believe that with the help of God I shall in this way somehow succeed. Apart from my experience in which I have understood a great deal, I know about these from some very learned men and very holy persons who are worthy of belief. And when souls reach this stage, through the goodness of God, may they not go about as wearied as I did.

Chapter 16

Treats of the third degree of prayer. Explains sublime matters and what the soul that reaches this stage can do and the effects produced by these great favors of the Lord. This chapter lifts the soul up in the praises of God and brings wonderful consolation to whoever reaches this stage.

LET US COME NOW to speak of the third water by which this garden is irrigated, that is, the water flowing from a river or spring. By this means the garden is irrigated with much less labor, although some labor is required to direct the flow of the water. The Lord so desires to help the gardener here that He Himself becomes practically the gardener and the one who does everything.

This prayer is a sleep of the faculties: the faculties neither fail entirely to function nor understand how they function. The consolation, the sweetness, and the delight are incomparably greater

than that experienced in the previous prayer. The water of grace rises up to the throat of this soul since such a soul can no longer move forward; nor does it know how; nor can it move backward. It would desire to enjoy the greatest glory. It is like a person who is already holding the candle and for whom little is left before dying the death that is desired: such a one rejoices in that agony with the greatest delight describable. This experience doesn't seem to me to be anything else than an almost complete death to all earthly things and an enjoyment of God.

I don't know any other terms for describing it or how to explain it. Nor does the soul then know what to do because it doesn't know whether to speak or to be silent, whether to laugh or to weep. This prayer is a glorious foolishness, a heavenly madness where the true wisdom is learned; and it is for the soul a most delightful way of enjoying.

2. In fact five or even six years ago the Lord often gave me this prayer in abundance, and I didn't understand it; nor did I know how to speak of it. Thus it was my intention, at this point, to say very little or nothing at all. I did understand clearly that it was not a complete union of all the faculties and that this type of prayer was more excellent than the previous one. But I confess that I couldn't discern or understand where the difference lay. I believe that on account of the humility your Reverence¹ has shown in desiring to be helped by as simple-minded a person as myself, the Lord today after Communion granted me this prayer; and interrupting my thanksgiving, He put before me these comparisons, taught me the manner of explaining it, and what the soul must do here. Certainly I was startled and I understood at once. Often I had been as though bewildered and inebriated in this love, and never was I able to understand its nature. I understood clearly that it was God's work, but I couldn't understand how He was working in this stage. For the truth of the matter is that the faculties are almost totally united with God but not so absorbed as not to function. I am extremely pleased that I now understand it. Blessed be the Lord who so favored me!

3. The faculties have only the ability to be occupied completely with God. It doesn't seem that any one of them dares to move, nor can we make them stir unless we strain to distract ourselves;

but even then I don't think we could do so entirely. One utters many words here in praise of God without thinking them up, unless it is the Lord who thinks them up; at least the intellect is worth nothing here. The soul would desire to cry out praises, and it is beside itself—a delightful disquiet. Now the flowers are blossoming; they are beginning to spread their fragrance. The soul would desire here that everyone could see and understand its glory so as to praise God and that they would all help it to praise Him and share in its joy since it cannot bear so much joy. I think it is like what is said in the Gospels about the woman that wanted to call or did call in her neighbors.² This joy it seems to me must have been what was felt in the admirable spirit of the royal prophet David when he played on the harp and sang the praises of God. I'm very devoted to this glorious king, and I would desire all to be so, especially those of us who are sinners.³

4. Oh, help me God! What is the soul like when it is in this state! It would want to be all tongues so as to praise the Lord. It speaks folly in a thousand holy ways, ever trying to find means of pleasing the one who thus possesses it. I know a person who though not a poet suddenly composed some deeply-felt verses well expressing her pain. They were not composed by the use of her intellect; rather, in order that she enjoy the glory so delightful a distress gave to her, she complained of it in this way to God. She desired all her body and soul to break in pieces to demonstrate the joy she felt in this pain. What torments can then be offered her that will not give her delight when she suffers them for her Lord? I see clearly that the martyrs did nothing of themselves in suffering torments, for the soul well knows that fortitude comes from another. But what will it feel in returning to its senses so as to live in the world and in having to return to the world's cares and formalities?

Well, it doesn't seem to me that I have exaggerated. Nothing can compare with the delight the Lord desires a soul to enjoy in this exile. May You be blessed forever, Lord! May all things praise You forever! Since while I write this I am not freed from such holy, heavenly madness coming from Your goodness and mercy—for You grant this favor without any merits on my part

at all—either desire, my King, I beseech You, that all to whom I speak become mad from Your love, or do not permit that I speak to anyone! Either ordain, Lord, that I no longer pay attention to anything in the world, or take me out of it! No longer my God, can this servant of Yours suffer the many trials that come from seeing herself without You since if she must live, she desires no rest—nor should You give it to her! This soul would now want to see itself free—eating kills it; sleeping distresses it. It observes that its lifetime is passing in pleasure and that nothing other than You can give it pleasure any longer; for since it desires to live no longer in itself but in You, it seems that its life is unnatural.

5. O true Lord and my Glory! How delicate and extremely heavy a cross You have prepared for those who reach this state! “Delicate” because it is pleasing; “heavy” because there come times when there is no capacity to bear it; and yet the soul would never want to be freed from it unless it were for the sake of being with You. When it recalls that it hasn’t served You in anything and that by living it can serve You, it would want to carry a much heavier cross and never die until the end of the world. It finds no rest in anything except in doing You some small service. It doesn’t know what it wants, but it well understands that it wants nothing other than You.

6. O my son!⁴ (The one to whom this is addressed and who ordered me to write this is so humble that he wants to be so called.) Let some of these things which your Reverence sees that I go to excess in be for you alone. There is no reason sufficient to prevent me from this excess when the Lord carries me out of myself—nor since this morning when I received Communion do I think it is I who am speaking. It seems that what I see is a dream, and I would desire to see no other persons than those who are sick with this sickness I now have. I beg your Reverence that we may all be mad for love of Him who for love of us was called mad. Since your Reverence says that you love me, prove it to me by preparing yourself so that God may grant you this favor; I see very few who do not have much more discretion than is necessary for their spiritual progress. It could well be that I am the one who abounds in this more than all others. Don’t

allow this to happen to me, my Father (since you are also like a son), for you are my confessor and the one to whom I have entrusted my soul. Disillusion me with truth since these truths are seldom made use of.

7. I should like the five of us who at present love each other in Christ⁵ to make a kind of pact that since others in these times gather together in secret against His Majesty to prepare wicked deeds and heresies, we might seek to gather together some time to free each other from illusion and to speak about how we might mend our ways and please God more since we do not know ourselves as well as others who observe us if they do so with love and concern for our progress. I say we should gather in secret because this kind of talk is no longer in fashion. Even preachers are composing their sermons so as not to displease. They may have good intentions, and the good deeds may follow; but the result is that few try to amend! But why don't sermons influence many to give up public vice? Do you know my opinion? Those who preach are very cautious; they don't have the great fire of love of God that the Apostles did, and so the flame has little power to enkindle. I don't say the fire should be as intense as that of the Apostles, but would that it were greater than what I see. Does your Reverence know what ought to be stressed? That souls abhor their lives and hold their reputations in little esteem, that—providing they tell the truth and uphold it for the glory of God—they pay little attention to whether or not they lose or gain all. Those who in fact risk all for God will find that they have both lost all and gained all. I don't say that I'm like this, but I wish I were.

8. Oh what great freedom to consider it a captivity to have to live and behave in conformity with the laws of the world! Since this freedom is obtained from the Lord, there are no slaves who would not risk all in order to be redeemed and return to their country. Since this is the true way, there is no reason to stop in the middle; otherwise we will never completely gain so great a treasure until life is finished. May the Lord grant us the favor of obtaining it.

Tear up what I have just said, if your Reverence thinks you should, as though it were a private letter to you, and pardon

me for I have been very bold.

Chapter 17

Continues with the same subject, the explanation of this third degree of prayer. Concludes the discussion of its effects. Speaks of the harm caused here by the imagination and memory.

A REASONABLE ACCOUNT has been given of this kind of prayer and of what the soul must do, or better, what God does in it, for it is He who now takes on the task of gardener and wants it to rest. The will only gives its consent to these favors it enjoys; and it should offer itself to all that the true Wisdom desires to do in it because courage is certainly necessary. For the joy is so great that it sometimes seems the soul is at the very point of going forth from the body. And what a happy death that would be!

2. Here I think it is advisable, as I told your Reverence,¹ to abandon oneself completely into the hands of God: if He wants to bring the soul to heaven, it goes, if to hell, it feels no grief since it goes with its God; if its life comes to an end, this it desires; if it lives a thousand years, this too it desires. Let His Majesty treat it as His own—the soul no longer belongs to itself. It is given over entirely to the Lord—it completely overlooks itself. I say that when God gives the soul so lofty a prayer, it can do all of this and much more since these are its effects. And it understands that it does so without tiring the intellect. I only think it is amazed at seeing how good a gardener the Lord is and how He doesn't desire it to do any of the work other than delight in the fragrance the flowers are beginning to give. For in one of these visits, however brief, the water is given without measure because the gardener is who He is—in truth, the creator of the water. And what the poor soul could not achieve in about twenty years with its labors to bring repose to the intellect, this heavenly gardener accomplishes in a moment. And the fruit grows and matures in such a way that the soul can be sustained from its garden if the Lord so desires. But He doesn't give it

permission to distribute fruit until it is very strong from what it has eaten; otherwise it will be giving it to others to taste without their receiving any profit or gain, maintaining them and giving them to eat at its own cost; and perhaps it will itself be left dead from hunger. This possibility has been explained well for those who are learned men, and they will know how to make the application better than I know how to explain it through my own efforts.

3. In sum, the virtues are now stronger than in the previous prayer of quiet. The soul can't ignore them, because it seems that it is different and doesn't know how this happened. It begins to perform great deeds by means of the fragrance the flowers give, for the Lord desires that they bloom so that it may see that it possesses virtue although it is very clearly aware that it couldn't have acquired them — nor was it able to — in many years, and also that in that moment the heavenly gardener gave them. Here the humility that remains in the soul is much greater and more profound than in the past. The soul sees more clearly that it did neither little nor much other than consent to the Lord's favors and embrace them with its will.

It seems to me this kind of prayer is a very apparent union of the whole soul with God. But seemingly His Majesty desires to give leeway to the faculties so that they may understand and rejoice in the many things He is accomplishing here.

4. In order that your Reverence may see what can happen and understand when it does happen to you — at least I was confused for a while, and that's why I'm speaking of it here — let me say that it sometimes, or very often, comes about that while the will is united, the soul sees clearly and understands that the will is held fast and is rejoicing. I say "it sees clearly," and that the will alone is in deep quiet; and the intellect and the memory, on the other hand, are so free that they can tend to business affairs and engage in works of charity.

Although this prayer seems entirely the same as the prayer of quiet I mentioned,² it is different — partly because in the prayer of quiet the soul didn't desire to move or stir, rejoicing in that holy idleness of Mary; and in this prayer it can also be Martha in such a way that it is as though engaged in both the

active and contemplative life together. It tends to works of charity and to business affairs that have to do with its state of life and to reading; although it isn't master of itself completely. And it understands clearly that the best part of the soul is somewhere else. It's as though we were speaking to someone at our side and from the other side another person were speaking to us; we wouldn't be fully attentive to either the one or the other. This prayer is something that is felt very clearly, and it gives deep satisfaction and happiness when it is experienced. It is an excellent preparation so that the soul may reach a profound quiet when it has time for solitude, or leisure from business matters. It causes the soul to go about like people whose appetite is satisfied and who have no need to eat but feel that they have taken enough so that they wouldn't desire just any kind of food; yet they are not so filled that they wouldn't eagerly eat some if it were tempting to the appetite. The soul is therefore neither content with nor desirous of the world's satisfactions, because it has in itself what pleases it more; greater consolations from God—desires to satisfy its desire to enjoy Him more and to be with Him. Being with Him is what it wants.

5. There is another kind of union, which, although it is not a complete union, is greater than the union just mentioned but not as great as that which was mentioned in reference to this third water.³

Since the Lord may give them all to you if you have not already received them, your Reverence will be pleased to find them written down and will understand what they are. For it is one grace to receive the Lord's favor; another, to understand which favor and grace it is; and a third, to know how to describe and explain it. And although no more than the first grace seems necessary, it is a great advantage and a gift for the soul that it also understand the favor so as not to go about confused and afraid—and so that it may become more courageous in following the path of the Lord, trampling under its feet all worldly things. Each one of these graces is a reason for those who receive it to praise the Lord greatly and, also, for those who may not receive it to praise Him because His Majesty gave it to one of the living so that that person might help the rest of us.

Well, now, this kind of union I wish to explain often happens—especially to me since God frequently gives me this kind of favor. For God takes to Himself the will and even the intellect, it seems to me, so that it might not engage in discourse but be occupied with rejoicing in Him like those who are contemplating and who see so much that they don't know where to fix their gaze—looking now here, now there, without being able to perceive clearly any one thing. The memory remains free, but it seems to be joined with the imagination. And since it sees itself alone,¹ the war it wages is something to behold—how it strives to disturb everything. As for me, I find the memory tiresome and abhorrent; and I often beseech the Lord that He take it away during these periods if it is going to bother me so much. Sometimes I say to Him: “When, my God, will my soul be completely joined together in Your praise and not broken in pieces, unable to make use of itself?” Here I see the evil that sin causes in us since it so holds us in its power that we cannot do what we desire to do in order to be always occupied in God.

6. I say it sometimes happens to me—and today was one of these times, so I remember it vividly—that I see my soul become undone in the desire to be united there where the greater part is, and this is impossible; rather the imagination and memory carry on such a war that the soul is left powerless. Since the other faculties have ceased to function, these two are of no avail, not even for doing harm. They do a great deal though by their disturbance. I say “not even for doing harm” because they do not have the strength nor can they concentrate on one thing. Since the intellect gives them neither much nor little assistance in what they represent to it, they don't rest in anything but flit from one thing to the other; they are like little moths at night, bothersome and annoying: so they go from one extreme to the other. This comparison, I think, gets to the point because they don't have the strength to do any harm—they are an annoyance to those who see them.

I don't know what remedy there is for this since until now God hasn't made one known to me. I would be glad to find out one, for, as I say, the imagination and memory often torment me. Both our great misery and, very clearly, the tremendous

power of God are manifested here. For the faculties that run loose weary and harm us so much; and those that are with His Majesty give us repose.

7. The only remedy I have found, after having tired myself out for many years, is the one I mentioned in speaking of the prayer of quiet:⁵ to pay no more attention to the memory than one would to a madman—leave it go its way, for only God can stop it and, in truth, here it remains as a slave. We must suffer it with patience as Jacob did Leah, for the Lord does us a great favor in allowing us to enjoy Rachel.⁶ I say “it remains as a slave” because in fact the memory is unable—no matter what it does—to gather to itself the other faculties; rather, without any labor, they often make the memory come to them. Sometimes God is pleased to take pity when seeing the memory so lost and disturbed and desirous of being with the others, and His Majesty consents to its being burnt in the fire of that divine candle where the others are already reduced to dust since they have lost their natural being and are almost supernatural in their enjoyment of such great blessings.

8. In all these ways in which this last water comes from the spring I mentioned,⁷ the glory and repose of the soul is so great that the body very perceivably shares in that joy and delight; it does so “very perceivably,” and the virtues are as advanced as I have mentioned.⁸

It seems that the Lord has desired to explain as much of these states in which the soul finds itself as can be understood here below. Your Reverence can discuss this explanation with a spiritual person who has experienced these states and who is also learned. If he should say that the explanation is all right, believe that it was given by God and thank His Majesty very much for it. Because, as I have said,⁹ with the passing of time individuals will be very glad to understand what it is; even though they are given the grace to enjoy it, they aren’t given the grace to understand it. If His Majesty has given you the grace to enjoy this prayer, you will through your intelligence and learning understand what is said here. May He be praised for everything throughout all ages, amen.

Chapter 18

Discusses the fourth degree of prayer. Begins to offer an excellent explanation of the great dignity the Lord bestows upon the soul in this state. Gives much encouragement to those who engage in prayer that they might strive to attain so high a stage since it can be reached on earth, although not by merit but through God's goodness. This should be read attentively, for the explanation is presented in a very subtle way and there are many noteworthy things.¹

MAY THE LORD TEACH ME the words necessary for explaining something about the fourth water. Clearly His favor is necessary, even more so than for what was explained previously. In the previous prayer, since the soul was conscious of the world, it did not feel that it was totally dead—for we can speak of this last prayer in such a way. But, as I said,² the soul has its senses by which it feels its solitude and understands that it is in the world; and it uses exterior things to make known what it feels, even though this may be through signs.

In all the prayer and modes of prayer that were explained, the gardener does some work, even though in these latter modes the work is accompanied by so much glory and consolation for the soul that it would never want to abandon this prayer. As a result, the prayer is not experienced as work but as glory. In this fourth water the soul isn't in possession of its senses, but it rejoices without understanding what it is rejoicing in. It understands that it is enjoying a good in which are gathered together all goods, but this good is incomprehensible. All the senses are occupied in this joy in such a way that none is free to be taken up with any other exterior or interior thing.

In the previous degrees, the senses are given freedom to show some signs of the great joy they feel. Here in this fourth water the soul rejoices incomparably more; but it can show much less since no power remains in the body, nor does the soul have any power to communicate its joy. At such a time, everything would be a great obstacle and a torment and a hindrance to its repose. And I say that if this prayer is the union of all the faculties, the soul is unable to communicate its joy even though it may desire

to do so — I mean while being in the prayer. And if it were able, then this wouldn't be union.

2. How this prayer they call³ union comes about and what it is, I don't know how to explain. These matters are expounded in mystical theology; I wouldn't know the proper vocabulary. Neither do I understand what the mind is; nor do I know how it differs from the soul or the spirit. It all seems to be the same thing to me, although the soul sometimes goes forth from itself. The way this happens is comparable to what happens when a fire is burning and flaming, and it sometimes becomes a forceful blaze. The flame then shoots very high above the fire, but the flame is not by that reason something different from the fire but the same flame that is in the fire. Your Reverence with your learning will understand this, for I don't know what else to say.

3. What I'm attempting to explain is what the soul feels when it is in this divine union. What union is we already know since it means that two separate things become one. O my Lord, how good You are! May You be blessed forever! May all things praise You, my God, for You have so loved us that we can truthfully speak of this communication which You engage in with souls even in our exile! And even in the case of those who are good, this still shows great generosity and magnanimity. In fact, it is Your communication, my Lord; and You give it in the manner of who You are. O infinite Largess, how magnificent are Your works!⁴ It frightens those whose intellects are not occupied with things of the earth that they have no intellect by which they can understand divine truths. That You bestow such sovereign favors on souls that have offended You so much certainly brings my intellect to a halt; and when I begin to think about this, I'm unable to continue. Where can the intellect go that would not be a turning back since it doesn't know how to give You thanks for such great favors? Sometimes I find it a remedy to speak absurdities.

4. After I have just received these favors or when God is beginning to give them to me (for at the time one is receiving them as I have already mentioned there's no power to do anything), it often happens that I say:

Lord, look what You are doing. Don't forget so quickly my

great wickedness. Now that in order to pardon me You have forgotten it, I beseech You to remember it that You might put a limit on Your favors. Don't, my Creator, pour such precious liqueur in so broken a bottle;⁵ You have already seen at other times how I only spill and waste it. Don't place a treasure like this in a place where cupidity for life's consolations is still not cast off as it should be; otherwise it will be badly squandered. How is it that You surrender the strength of this city and the keys to its fortress to so cowardly a mayor who at the first attack allows the enemy to enter? Don't let Your love be so great, eternal King, as to place in risk such precious jewels. It seems, my Lord, that the occasion is given for esteeming them but little since You put them in the power of a thing so wretched, so lowly, so weak and miserable, and of so little importance. For although she strives with Your help not to lose them (and there is need for more than a little effort because of what I am), she cannot make use of them to win over anyone. In sum, she is a woman; and not a good but a wretched one. It seems that the talents are not only hidden but even buried⁶ by being placed in such vile earth. You are not accustomed, Lord, to bestow on a soul grandeurs and favors like these unless for the profit of many. You already know, my God, that with all my heart and will I beseech You and have besought You at times in the past that You grant these favors to someone who would make better use of them for the increase of Your glory—and that I would consider it a blessing to lose the greatest earthly good possessable in order that You do so.

5. These and other things it often occurred to me to say. I saw afterward my foolishness and lack of humility; the Lord well knows what is fitting and that I would not have the strength in my soul to be saved if His Majesty didn't give it to me through so many favors.

6. I also intend to speak of the graces and effects that are left in the soul, of whether it can do something on its own to reach so great a state, and of what this something might be.

7. The elevation of the spirit, or joining with heavenly love, which I shall describe, takes place within this very union.⁷ The union, as I understand it, is different from the elevation. It will

seem to anyone who may not have experienced this elevation of the spirit that there is no difference between the two; but, in my opinion, though they are one, the Lord works differently in each case. And in the flight of the spirit this difference is seen by a much greater increase in detachment from creatures. I have perceived clearly that the elevation of the spirit is a particular favor, even though as I say it may be the same as union or appear to be so. A small fire is just as much a fire as is a large one. Through this example one can see the difference there is between union and elevation of the spirit. In a small fire it takes a lot of time for a piece of iron to become red-hot. But if the fire is great, the piece of iron, even though large, will in a short time lose its entire being—or it will appear to do so. This example, it seems to me, shows what the difference between the two favors from the Lord is like. I know that anyone who has reached the experience of raptures will understand the difference well. To one who has no experience the explanation will seem confusing, and it could well be. It is not surprising that there is confusion when a person like myself wants to speak of such a thing and to give some explanation of an experience that it seems one cannot even begin to put into words.

8. But I believe the Lord will help me in this explanation. His Majesty knows that besides obeying it is my intention to attract souls to so high a blessing. I shall say nothing about things of which I don't have much experience. And it is a fact that when I began to write about this last water it seemed impossible to know how to speak of it without making it sound like Greek; for it is very difficult to explain. So I set the work aside and went to receive Communion. Blessed be the Lord who so favors the ignorant! O virtue of obedience that can do all things! God enlightened my intellect: sometimes with words, at other times showing me how to explain this favor, as He did with the previous prayer.⁸ His Majesty, it seems, wanted to say what I neither was able nor knew how to say.

What I am telling is the complete truth, and so whatever is good is His doctrine; whatever is bad clearly comes from the ocean of evil that I am. Thus I say that if persons who had reached the experiences in prayer that the Lord has favored this

miserable creature with—and there must be many—wanted to speak to me of these because they thought they had gone astray, the Lord would help His servant to show them the true way.

9. Well now, let us speak of this heavenly water that in its abundance soaks and saturates this entire garden: if the Lord were always to give it when there is need, the gardener would evidently have it easy. And if there were no winter and the weather were always mild, there would be no lack of flowers and fruit. It is obvious how delighted the gardener would be. But this is impossible while we are living on this earth. Individuals must always take care so that when one kind of water is lacking they might strive for the other. This water from heaven often comes when the gardener is least expecting it. True, in the beginning it almost always occurs after a long period of mental prayer. The Lord comes to take this tiny bird from one degree to another and to place it in the nest so that it may have repose. Since He has seen it fly about for a long time, striving with the intellect and the will and all its strength to see God and please Him, He desires to reward it even in this life. And what a tremendous reward; one moment is enough to repay all the trials that can be suffered in life!

10. While the soul is seeking God in this way, it feels with the most marvelous and gentlest delight that everything is almost fading away through a kind of swoon in which breathing and all the bodily energies gradually fail. This experience comes about in such a way that one cannot even stir the hands without a lot of effort. The eyes close without one's wanting them to close; or if these persons keep them open, they see hardly anything—nor do they read or succeed in pronouncing a letter, nor can they hardly even guess what the letter is. They see the letter; but since the intellect gives no help, they don't know how to read it even though they may desire to do so. They hear but don't understand what they hear. Thus they receive no benefit from the senses—unless it be that these latter do not take away their pleasure, since doing so would cause harm. In vain do they try to speak because they don't succeed in forming a word, nor if they do succeed is there the strength left to be able to pronounce it. All the external energy is lost, and that of the soul is increased

so that it might better enjoy its glory. The exterior delight that is felt is great and very distinct.

11. This prayer causes no harm, no matter how long it lasts. At least it never caused me any, nor do I recall the Lord ever having granted me this favor that I didn't feel much better afterward no matter how ill I had been before. But what illness can produce so wonderful a blessing? The external effects are so apparent that one cannot doubt that a great event has taken place; these external powers are taken away with such delight in order to leave greater ones.

12. It is true that in the beginning this prayer passes so quickly — at least it happened this way to me — that neither these exterior signs nor the failure of the senses are very noticeable. But the soul well understands that the sun's brightness therein was powerful since it melted the soul away. It is noteworthy that the longest space of time, in my opinion, in which the soul remains in this suspension of all the faculties is very short; should it remain suspended for a half hour, this would be a very long time. I don't think I ever experienced this suspension for so long. It is true that since there is no sensory consciousness one finds it hard to know what is happening. But I am saying that in an occurrence of this prayer only a short time passes without one of the faculties returning to itself. It is the will that holds high the banner;⁹ the other two faculties quickly go back to being a bother. Since the will remains quiet, the others are again suspended for a little while — then return again to life.

13. In this way a person can and in fact does spend several hours in prayer. Once the two faculties have begun to taste the divine wine and be inebriated by it,¹⁰ they easily lose themselves again so as to gain much more; and they accompany the will, and all three rejoice. But I say this loss of them all and suspension of the imagination — which as I understand it is also completely lost — lasts only a short while; yet these faculties don't return to themselves so completely that they are incapable of remaining for several hours as though bewildered while God gradually gathers them again to Himself.

14. Now let us come to what the soul experiences here interiorly. Let those who know how speak of it since it cannot be

understood—much less put into words!

After having received Communion and been in this very prayer I'm writing about, I was thinking when I wanted to write something on it of what the soul did during that time. The Lord spoke these words to me: "It detaches itself from everything, daughter, so as to abide more in me. It is no longer the soul that lives but I. Since it cannot comprehend what it understands, there is an understanding by not understanding."

Whoever may have experienced this prayer will know something about it; since what happens is so obscure, it can't be explained more clearly. I can only say that the soul appears to be joined to God, and there remains such certitude about this union that the soul cannot help believing in the truth of it. In this prayer all the faculties fail and they are so suspended that in no way, as I said,¹¹ does one think they are working. If a person is reflecting upon some scriptural event, it becomes as lost to the memory as it would be if there had never been any thought of it. If the person reads, there is no remembrance of what was read; nor is there any remembrance if one prays vocally. Thus this bothersome little moth, which is the memory, gets its wings burnt here; it can no longer move. The will is fully occupied in loving, but it doesn't understand how it loves. The intellect, if it understands, doesn't understand how it understands; at least it can't comprehend anything of what it understands. It doesn't seem to me that it understands, because, as I say, it doesn't understand—I really can't understand this!

15. In the beginning I was ignorant about a certain matter because I didn't know that God was in all things, and though He seemed so present to me, I thought this omnipresence was impossible. I couldn't stop believing that He was there since it seemed to me that I understood almostly clearly that He was there by His very presence. Those who had no learning told me that He was present only by grace. I couldn't believe this, because, as I say, it seemed to me He was present; and so I was troubled. A very learned man from the order of the glorious St. Dominic¹² freed me from this doubt, for he told me that God was present and of how God communicates Himself to us; these truths consoled me tremendously.

It should be noted and understood that this heavenly water, this magnificent favor from the Lord, always leaves great fruits in the soul as I shall now explain.

Chapter 19

Continues on the same subject. Begins to explain the effects this degree of prayer produces in the soul. Strongly urges souls not to turn back, even if they fall again after receiving this favor, and not to give up prayer. Speaks of the harm that results from abandoning prayer. This chapter is very important and most consoling for the weak and for sinners.

THIS PRAYER AND UNION leaves the greatest tenderness in the soul in such a way that it would want to be consumed not from pain but from the joyous tears. It finds itself bathed in them without having felt them or knowing when or how it shed them. But it receives great delight in seeing that the driving force of that fire is quenched by a water that makes the fire increase. This sounds like gibberish, but that's what happens. It sometimes happened to me in this kind of prayer that I was so taken out of myself that I didn't know whether I was dreaming or whether the glory I was experiencing was indeed occurring. Seeing myself soaked by the water that came forth so forcefully and quickly and that seemingly poured from that heavenly cloud, I perceived that my experience had not been a dream. This prayer occurred in such a way at the beginning when it passed quickly.

2. The soul becomes so courageous that if at that moment it were cut in pieces for God, it would be greatly consoled. Such prayer is the source of heroic promises, of resolutions, and of ardent desires; it is the beginning of contempt for the world because of a clear perception of the world's vanity. The soul is much more improved and in a higher state than it was after the previous degrees of prayer. Its humility is deeper because it sees plainly that through no diligence of its own did it receive that very generous and magnificent gift and that it played no role in obtaining or experiencing it. Since there is no hidden cobweb

in a room where much sun enters, the soul sees clearly that it is most unworthy; it sees its misery. Vainglory goes off so far that it doesn't seem possible for the soul to have any. Since there was hardly even any consent there, it now with its own eyes sees it is capable of little or nothing. It seems, though it didn't desire this, that the door of all the senses was closed to it that it might be better able to enjoy the Lord. It remains alone with Him. What has it to do but love Him? It neither sees nor hears save by much effort. There is not much to thank the soul for. Afterward, with striking truth, its past life and the great mercy of God are shown to it. The intellect doesn't have to go hunting for this knowledge because it beholds there, all cooked and prepared, what it must eat and understand. It perceives that it merits hell and that yet it is chastised with glory. It consumes itself in the praises of God—and I would want to be consumed now. May You be blessed, my Lord, that from such filthy mud as I, You make water so clear that it can be served at Your table! May You be praised, O Joy of the angels, for having desired to raise up a worm so vile!

3. This progress in virtue remains for some time with the soul. It can now, with clear understanding that the fruits are not its own, begin to distribute them since it has no need of them. It starts to show signs of a soul that guards heavenly treasures and has the desire to share them with others, and it beseeches God that it may not be the only rich one. It begins to be of benefit to its neighbors almost without knowing it or doing anything of itself. They recognize it because now the fragrance of the flowers has reached the point in which it attracts others. The soul understands that it has virtues, and its neighbors see the desirable fruit. They would like to help it eat this fruit. If the soil is well cultivated by trials, persecutions, criticisms, and illnesses—for few there must be who reach this stage without them—and if it is softened by living in great detachment from self-interest, the water soaks it to the extent that it is almost never dry. But if the soil is still hardened in the earth and has a lot of briars, as I did in the beginning, and is still not so removed from occasions and if it doesn't have the gratitude a favor as great as this deserves, the ground will dry up again. And if the gardener

becomes careless and the Lord solely out of His goodness does not desire to let the rains come again, the garden can be considered as lost. So it happened to me sometimes. I am certainly amazed; if it hadn't befallen me, I'd be unable to believe it. I write this for the consolation of weak souls like myself that they might never despair or fail to trust in the greatness of God. Even though they may fall after elevations like the ones to which the Lord here brings them, they ought not to grow discouraged if they don't want to become completely lost. For tears gain all things: one water draws down the other.

4. That one ought not to grow discouraged is one of the reasons that encouraged me—being what I am—to obey and write an account of my wretched life and of the favors the Lord granted me without my serving Him but rather offending Him. I should certainly like to have a great deal of authority in this matter so that I might be believed. I beseech the Lord to give it. I say that no one who has begun to practice prayer should become discouraged by saying: "If I return to evil, matters will become worse should I continue the practice of prayer." I believe matters become worse if one abandons prayer and doesn't amend one's evil ways. But if people don't abandon it, they may believe that prayer will bring them to the harbor of light. The devil carried out a great assault upon me in this matter. Since I was wretched, I spent so long a time in thinking it was a lack of humility to practice prayer that, as I have already said, I abandoned it for a year and a half—at least for a year; I don't remember well about the half. And doing this was no more, nor could it have been, than putting myself right in hell without the need of devils to urge me on. Oh, God help me, what great blindness! And how right the devil is to direct his attacks so that the soul give up prayer! The traitor knows that he has lost the soul that practices prayer perseveringly and that all the falls he helps it to take assist it afterward, through the goodness of God, to make a great leap forward in the Lord's service. No wonder he's so concerned!

5. O my Jesus! What a sight it is when You through Your mercy return to offer Your hand and raise up a soul that has fallen in sin after having reached this stage! How such a soul

knows the multitude of Your grandeurs and mercies and its own misery! In this state it is in truth consumed and knows Your splendors. Here it doesn't dare raise its eyes, and here it raises them up so as to know what it owes You. Here it becomes a devotee of the Queen of heaven so that she might appease You; here it invokes the help of the saints that fell after having been called by You.² Here it seems that everything You give it is undeserved because it sees that it doesn't merit the ground on which it treads. Here, in approaching the sacraments, it has the living faith to see the power that God has placed in them; it praises You because You have left such a medicine and ointment for our wounds and because this medicine not only covers these wounds but takes them away completely.³ It is amazed by all this. And who, Lord of my soul, wouldn't be amazed by so much mercy and a favor so large for a betrayal so ugly and abominable? I don't know why my heart doesn't break as I write this! For I am a wretched person!

6. With these little tears, given by You, that I shed—water, on my part, from so loathsome a well—it seems I repay You for all my betrayals, in which I always do evil and strive to undo the favors You've granted me. Place a value, my Lord, upon these tears. Cleanse this water so foul lest others be tempted to make judgments, as happened to me, when they wonder why, Lord, You abandon some very holy persons who have always served and labored for You, who were brought up religiously and who are truly religious (and not like myself who was a religious only in name), and when they see clearly that You do not grant them the favors you do me. I well perceived, my God, that You keep the reward so as to give it to those holy persons all together and that I need this reward because of my weakness. Now they, like strong men, serve You without these favors; and You deal with them as with a fortified people and not a self-interested one.

7. Nevertheless, You know, my Lord, that I often called out to You to excuse those persons who criticized me because it seemed to me they were more than right. This occurred, Lord, after You kept me, out of your goodness, from offending You so much and when I was turning aside from all that it seemed

to me could anger You. When I did this, You began, Lord, to open Your treasures to Your handmaid. It doesn't seem You were waiting for anything other than the will and readiness in me to receive them since You quickly began not only to give them but to desire that others know You were giving them.

8. Once others knew this, I began to be held in esteem by those who had not yet realized what a wretched person I was however much this evil showed through. Suddenly the criticism and persecution began; but, in my opinion, with every reason. So I didn't bear ill-will toward anybody, but besought You to observe how right they were. They said I was trying to make myself out to be a saint and was inventing novelties without then even having attained to the full observance of my rule or to the level of the very good and holy nuns there were in the house. (Nor do I myself believe I will ever arrive if God in His goodness doesn't do everything Himself.) They said that rather it was I who was taking away the good customs and introducing those that were not—at least that I was doing what I could to introduce them and that I was capable of causing a great deal of harm. So without any fault on their part they accused me. I don't say that only the nuns did this, but there were other persons as well. They revealed truths to me because You permitted this, Lord.

9. Once, in the midst of such persecution, while reciting the Hours, I came to the verse that says: *Justus es, Domine, and Your judgments*.⁴ I began to think of what a great truth this was. For the devil never had the power to tempt me to doubt that You, my Lord, possess all good things, or to tempt me in any matter of faith; rather it seemed to me that the more the things of faith go beyond what is natural the stronger the faith—and this thought enkindled great devotion in me. Just believing that You are all powerful was enough for me to receive all the grandeurs that You work, and this power, as I say, I never doubted. Thus, while I was thinking that You justly permit that there be many, as I have mentioned,⁵ who are very good servants of Yours and yet do not receive these gifts and favors You grant me because of what I am, You answered me, Lord: "Serve me, and don't bother about such things." This was the first locution I heard You speak to me, and so I was very frightened.

Since, among other things, I shall afterward explain^b this manner of understanding, I will not speak of it here; it would be off the subject—and I think I've already gone far off. I hardly know what I've said. It can't be otherwise, my son; your Reverence must endure these digressions. When I see what patience God has had with me and see myself in this state, it doesn't take much to lose the thread of what I'm saying and intend to say. May it please the Lord that my follies be always like these, and may His Majesty no longer allow me to have the power to offend Him the least bit; rather, may I be consumed in this prayer.

10. What I've said is enough now for beholding His great mercies, not the one time but the many times He has pardoned so much ingratitude. Saint Peter, You pardoned once when he was ungrateful; me, You pardoned many times.⁷ With what reason the devil tempted me not to pretend to be a friend with one whom I treated publicly like an enemy. What terrible blindness mine was! Where, my Lord, did I think I could find a remedy save in You? What folly; to flee from the light so as to be always stumbling! Such proud humility the devil invented in me: withdrawing from the column and the staff which were my support against a fall so great! Now I make the sign of the cross with amazement, and it doesn't seem to me that I underwent any danger as bad as with this invention the devil taught me under the pretext of humility. He put the thought in my head to question how, since I was so wretched and had received so many favors, I could engage in prayer; and the thought that it was enough for me to recite, like everyone else, my obligatory vocal prayers; and the question about how I could pretend to do more since I didn't even say my vocal prayers well; he suggested that engaging in prayer showed a lack of reverence and little esteem for the favors of God.

It was right to think about and understand these things; but to give up the practice of prayer was the greatest evil. May You be blessed, Lord, who came to my rescue.

11. It seems to me that this was the way the devil began to tempt Judas, except that in my case this traitorous devil did not work so openly; but little by little he did to me what he did to

Judas. For the love of God let all those who practice prayer observe this. Let them know that during the time in which I was without prayer my life was much worse. Look at the good remedy the devil gave me and the charming humility—the great disquiet within me. But how could I quiet my soul? It was losing its calm; it remembered favors and gifts; it saw that this world's pleasures are disgusting. How it was able to go on amazes me. I did so by means of hope because I never thought (insofar as I now recall, for this must have happened twenty-one years ago) I would cease being determined to return to prayer—but I was waiting to be very purified of sin. Oh, how wrong was the direction in which I was going with this hope! The devil would have kept me hoping until judgment day and then have led me into hell.

12. Through the practice of prayer and spiritual reading I knew the truths and the bad road I was following and often entreated the Lord with many tears, but I was so wretched that these were of no avail. Separated from prayer, taken up with many pastimes and placed in many occasions with few aids—and I dare say none, unless they were aids to my falling—what was there to hope for except hell, as I mentioned?

I believe that a Dominican friar,⁸ a very learned man, is worthy of merit in the sight of God, for he woke me from this sleep if not completely from my evil ways. He made me receive Communion, as I believe I mentioned, every fifteen days. I began to return to my senses, although I didn't cease offending the Lord. But since I hadn't lost the way, I advanced on it, even though very gradually, by falling and rising. And the one who doesn't fail to walk and advance on it shall arrive even though late. I don't think losing the way means anything else than giving up prayer. May God free us because of who He is!

13. My experience explains—and close attention should be given to it for the love of the Lord—that even though a soul may reach the stage in which God grants it such wonderful favors in prayer, it should not trust in itself; it can fall. Nor should it in any way place itself in the occasions of falling. This should be carefully noted because it is very important. The deception the devil can afterward cause in this matter, even though the

favor is certainly from God, is that the traitor profits as much as he can from this same gift. He deceives persons who are not advanced in the virtues, or mortified, or detached. They are not strong enough, as I shall say,⁹ to enter into the midst of occasions and dangers, no matter how great their desires and resolutions. This doctrine is excellent, and it is not mine, but taught by God. And so I would want ignorant persons, like myself, to know it. Even though a soul may be in this state, it must not trust itself in going out to battle, for it will have a hard time defending itself. Here one needs arms to defend oneself against devils, and persons in this state do not yet have the strength to fight against them and trample them under foot as do those who are in the state I shall afterward speak about.¹⁰

14. The devil plays a trick on the soul. Since it sees itself so close to God and perceives the difference there is between heavenly and earthly goods and the love the Lord shows it, it gains confidence from this love and the feeling of security that it will not fall away from what it enjoys. It thinks it clearly sees the reward and that it is no longer possible for it to abandon something that, even in this life, is so delightful and pleasing for anything as foul and base as earthly pleasure. And by means of this confidence the devil takes away its lowly estimation of itself. Believing it has no longer anything to fear from itself, as I say, the soul places itself in dangers and begins with splendid zeal to give away fruit without measure. It doesn't do this with pride; it well understands that of itself it can do nothing. It does it with great confidence in God, but without discretion since it doesn't observe that it is still a fledgling. It can leave the nest, and God takes it out; but it is still not ready to fly. The virtues are not yet strong, nor does it have the experience to recognize dangers, nor does it know the harm done by relying upon oneself.

15. This self-reliance was what destroyed me. For this reason and for every reason there is need of a master and for discussions with spiritual persons. I truly believe that God will not fail to favor the soul that reaches this state; nor will He allow it to be lost, unless it completely abandons His Majesty. But when, as I have said,¹¹ it falls, it should be extremely careful for the love of the Lord not to be tricked into giving up prayer, as I

was by the devil through false humility—as I have already said¹² and would like to say many times. It should trust in the goodness of God, which is greater than all the evils we are capable of. And He doesn't remember our ingratitude when we, although knowing about it, desire to return to His friendship; nor does He remember the favors He bestowed on us as punishment for these evils. On the contrary, all of this helps us to receive pardon more quickly as members of His household who have eaten, as I say, from His table. Souls should remember His words¹³ and see what He did with me; before I grew tired of offending Him, His Majesty began to pardon me. He never tires of giving, nor can He exhaust His mercies. Let us not tire of receiving. May He be blessed forever, amen—and may all things praise Him.

Chapter 20

Discusses the differences between union and rapture. Explains the nature of rapture and tells something about the good possessed by the soul that the Lord in His kindness brings to this prayer of rapture. Tells of its effects. There is much to marvel over.

I SHOULD LIKE TO KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN, with God's help, the difference there is between union and rapture, or, as they call it, elevation or flight of the spirit, or transport, which are all the same. I mean that these latter terms, though different, refer to the same thing; it is also called ecstasy.¹ The advantage rapture has over union is great. The rapture produces much stronger effects and causes many other phenomena. Union seems the same at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end; and it takes place in the interior of the soul. But since these other phenomena are of a higher degree, they produce their effect both interiorly and exteriorly. May the Lord explain as He did for the other degrees. Certainly, if His Majesty had not given me an understanding of the manners and ways in which something could be said about them, I would not have known how to speak of them.

2. Let us consider now that the last water we spoke of² is so plentiful that, if it were not for the fact that the earth doesn't allow it, we could believe that this cloud of His great Majesty is with us here on earth. But when we thank Him for this wonderful blessing, responding with works according to our strength, the Lord gathers up the soul, let us say now, in the way the clouds gather up the earthly vapors³ and raises it completely out of itself. The cloud ascends to heaven and brings the soul along, and begins to show it the things of the kingdom that He prepared for it. I don't know if this comparison is holding together, but the truth of the matter is that this is what happens.

3. In these raptures it seems that the soul is not animating the body. Thus there is a very strong feeling that the natural bodily heat is failing it. The body gradually grows cold, although this happens with the greatest ease and delight. At this stage there is no remedy that can be used to resist. In the union, since we are upon our earth, there is a remedy; though it may take pain and effort one can almost always resist. But in these raptures most often there is no remedy; rather, without any forethought or any help there frequently comes a force so swift and powerful that one sees and feels this cloud or mighty eagle raise it up and carry it aloft on its wings.

4. I say that one understands and sees oneself carried away and does not know where. Although this experience is delightful, our natural weakness causes fear in the beginning. It is necessary that the soul be resolute and courageous—much more so than for the prayer already described—in order to risk all, come what may, and abandon itself into the hands of God and go willingly wherever it is brought since, like it or not, one is taken away. So forceful is this enrapturing that very many times I wanted to resist and used all my energy, especially sometimes when it happened in public or other times when in secret and I was afraid of being deceived. At times I was able to accomplish something, but with a great loss of energy, as when someone fights with a giant and afterward is worn out. At other times it was impossible for me to resist, but it carried off my soul and usually, too, my head along with it, without my being able to hold back—and sometimes the whole body until it was raised from the

ground.

5. This latter has happened rarely. Once it happened when we were together in the choir ready to go up to receive Communion and while I was kneeling. I was very distressed because the experience seemed to me to be something most extraordinary and it would then become widely known. So I ordered the nuns—for this happened recently while I held the office of prioress—not to say anything about it. But at other times when I began to see the Lord was going to do the same (and once when there were some ladies of nobility present in order to hear a sermon, for it was our titular feast),⁴ I stretched out on the floor and the nuns came and held me down; nonetheless, this was seen. I begged the Lord very much not to give me any more favors that would involve any outward show, for I was tired of being considered so important—and His Majesty could grant me that favor without it being known. It seems in His goodness He was pleased to hear me because up to the present I have never had this experience again; true, I made this petition not so long ago.⁵

6. It seems to have happened that when I desired to resist them, such great powers raised me up from the very soles of my feet that I don't know what to compare these powers to; they were much greater than in the other spiritual experiences—and so I was worn out. The struggle is a fierce one, and in the end struggle is of little avail against the Lord's desire; there is no power against His power. At other times He is pleased that we see He desires to grant us the favor and that nothing is lacking on His Majesty's part; and when we resist out of humility, the very same effects are left in the soul that would be left if it were to give complete consent.

7. In those to whom this experience happens, the effects are remarkable. First, there is a manifestation of the tremendous power of the Lord and of how we are incapable, when His Majesty desires, of holding back the body any more than the soul, nor are we its master. Rather, whether or not we wish, we see that there is one who is superior, that these favors are given by Him, and that of ourselves we can do absolutely nothing; deep humility is impressed upon the soul. Yet I confess that the favor

greatly frightened me; at first the fear is extreme. When one sees one's body so elevated from the ground that even though the spirit carries it along after itself, and does so very gently if one does not resist, one's feelings are not lost. At least I was conscious in such a way that I could understand I was being elevated. There is revealed a majesty about the One who can do this that makes a person's hair stand on edge, and there remains a strong fear of offending so awesome a God. Yet such fear is accompanied by a very great love for Him, which grows ever deeper upon considering what He does to so rotten a worm. It doesn't seem He is satisfied in truly bringing the soul to Himself, but it seems He desires the body even though it is mortal and, on account of the many offenses it has committed, made of such foul clay.

8. The experience also leaves a rare detachment, which I am unable to describe. It seems to me that I can say the prayer is in a certain way different. I mean that more than spiritual things alone are involved. For now that the spirit is completely detached from things, it seems in this prayer that the Lord wants to effect this detachment in the body itself, and there is brought about a new estrangement from earthly things that makes life much more arduous.

9. Afterward there is a painful experience that we cannot produce ourselves, nor once it is felt can we put it aside. I should like so much to explain this deep pain. I believe I'll be unable to do so, but I'll try to say something. It should be noted that these experiences occur much later than all the visions and revelations I shall write of.⁶ The time I used to spend in a prayer in which the Lord gave me such great consolations and gifts—even though these are not completely absent—is now usually spent in this painful prayer I shall speak of. It is sometimes more intense, sometimes less intense. I want to speak now of when it is more intense. For although I shall speak afterward⁷ of those great loving impulses that I experienced when the Lord desired to give me raptures, those impulses are no more, in my opinion, than something that is very corporeal when compared to something very spiritual—and I don't think I'm greatly exaggerating. For in the pain that is experienced in those impulses,

the body feels it along with the soul, and both seem to have a share in it; there is not as extreme a desolation as is felt in this pain. In receiving this pain, as I said, we play no active role, but often a desire comes unexpectedly in a way I don't understand. With this desire, which penetrates the whole soul at once, the soul begins to grow so weary that it ascends far above itself and all creatures. God places it in a desert so distant from all things that, however, much it labors, it doesn't find a creature on earth that might accompany it—nor would it want to find one; it desires only to die in that solitude. That someone speak to it—and it wants to make every effort possible to speak—is of little avail since the spirit, no matter how much the soul tries, does not leave that solitude. And when it seems to me that God is then exceedingly far away, He at times communicates His grandeurs in the most strange manner thinkable. So one doesn't know how to speak of this communication, nor do I think anyone will believe me or understand it unless they have experienced it themselves. This communication is given not to console but to show the reason the soul has for becoming weary in the absence of a blessing that in itself contains all blessings.

10. With this communication the desire increases and also the extreme sense of solitude in which, even though the soul is in that desert, it sees with a pain so delicate and penetrating that it can, I think, literally say: *Vigilavi, et factus sum sicut passer solitarius in tecto*.⁸ (And perhaps the royal prophet said it while being in the same solitude, although since he was a saint the Lord would have given him this experience in a more intense way.) Hence this verse then came to mind, for I think I saw it realized in myself. It consoled me to know that other persons—and such great ones—had experienced so extreme a solitude. Thus it seems that the soul is not in itself, but on the roof or housetop of itself and of all created things because it seems to me to be even above the very superior part of the soul.

11. At other times it seems the soul goes about as though compelled to say and ask itself: *where is your God?*⁹ It is interesting to note that I didn't know what the vernacular of this verse was; after I understood it, I was consoled to see that the Lord had brought it to my mind without my having played any part in

the matter. At other times I recalled what St. Paul says, that he is crucified to the world.¹⁰ I am not saying that these words apply here; I realize they don't. But it seems to me that the soul is crucified since no consolation comes to it from heaven, nor is it in heaven; neither does it desire any from earth, nor is it on earth. Receiving no help from either side, it is as though crucified between heaven and earth. That which comes from heaven (which, as I said,¹¹ is so admirable a knowledge of God, very far above every desirable thing) causes more torment because the desire increases in such a way that, in my opinion, the intense pain sometimes takes away sensory consciousness; but this intensity lasts only a short time. The experience resembles the death agony with the difference that the suffering bears along with it such great happiness that I don't know what to compare it to. It is an arduous, delightful martyrdom since it admits no earthly thing representable to the soul, even if this be what is usually more pleasing to it. The soul, it seems, immediately hurls such things from itself. It clearly understands that it desires only its God. It doesn't love any particular aspect of Him, but loves Him all together and knows not what it loves. I say it "knows not" because the imagination doesn't represent anything; nor, in my opinion, do the faculties function during much of the time that this takes place. Just as it is joy that suspends the faculties in union and rapture, so it is pain that suspends them here.

12. O Jesus! Who could give a good explanation of this prayer to your Reverence so that you could explain it to me? It is what my soul is now always experiencing. Usually when unoccupied it is placed in the midst of these anxious longings for death; and when it sees they are beginning, it fears that it will not die. But once in the midst of them, it would desire to spend the remainder of its life in this suffering, even though the suffering is so excessive a person cannot endure it. Sometimes my pulse almost stops, according to what a number of the Sisters say who at times are near me and know more, and my arms are straight and my hands so stiff that occasionally I cannot join them. As a result, even the next day I feel pain in the pulse and in the body, as if the bones were disjoined.

13. I sometimes really think that if this prayer continues as it does now, the Lord would be served if my life came to an end. In my opinion, a pain as great as this is sufficient to put an end to life, but I don't merit death. All my longing then is to die; nor do I think about purgatory or of the great sins I've committed by which I've merited hell. I am oblivious of everything in that anxious longing to see God; that desert and solitude seem to the soul better than all the companionship of the world. If anything could give the soul consolation, it would be to speak to someone who had suffered this torment.

14. It is also a torment for the soul to see that even though it complains no one, seemingly, will believe it. This pain is so intense that the soul would not want solitude as before, nor would it want companionship with anyone other than one to whom it can complain. It is like a person suffocating with a rope around the neck and seeking to find relief. So it seems to me that this desire for companionship comes from our weakness, for the pain places us in danger of death. (Yes, this is what it certainly does. I have at times on account of my great illnesses and crises been in peril of death, as I mentioned;¹² and I believe it can be said that this danger is as great as all the others.) As a result, the desire the body and the soul have of not being separated is what makes one beg help in order to get relief. By speaking and complaining of the pain and by distracting itself, the soul seeks a remedy so as to live—much against the will of the spirit, or of its superior part, which would not want to break away from this pain.

15. I don't know if I'm meeting with success in what I'm saying or if I know how to say it, but in my firm opinion this is what happens. See, your Reverence, what rest the soul can have in this life. That rest that it had—which was prayer and solitude, because through these the Lord comforted me—now usually consists of this torment. Yet the torment is so pleasing and seen to be so valuable that now the soul desires this more than all the favors previously experienced. The experience seems safer because it follows the way of the cross. It contains in itself a very precious consolation, in my opinion; the body shares only in the pain, and it is the soul alone that both suffers and rejoices on

account of the joy and satisfaction the suffering gives. I don't know how this can happen, but it does. In my opinion, I would not trade this gift the Lord grants me (which comes from His hand and, as I said,¹³ is in no way acquired by me, because it is very, very supernatural) for all those I shall speak of afterward. I don't mean all those gifts taken together, but taken one by one. It must not be forgotten that this experience of pain comes after all those favors that are written of in this book, and it is what the Lord now grants me.¹⁴

16. When I was afraid in the beginning (as happens to me in the case of almost every gift the Lord gives me until His Majesty assures me as I make progress), the Lord told me not to fear and to esteem this gift more than all the others He had granted me. In this pain the soul is purified and fashioned or purged like gold in the crucible so that the enameled gifts might be placed there in a better way, and in this prayer it is purged of what otherwise it would have to be purged of in purgatory.

I clearly understood that it was a great favor, but I was left with much more assurance—and my confessor tells me that it is good. Although, since I am so wretched, I was afraid, I was never able to believe that it was bad; on the contrary, so abundant a blessing caused me fear when I remembered how poorly I merited it. Blessed be the Lord who is so good. Amen.

17. It seems I've gone off the subject because I began to speak of raptures;¹⁵ this that I have been speaking about is more than rapture, and so it leaves the effects I mentioned.

18. Now let us return to raptures and speak of what is more common in them. I say that often, it seemed to me, the body was left so light that all its weight was gone, and sometimes this feeling reached such a point that I almost didn't know how to put my feet on the ground. Now when the body is in rapture it is as though dead, frequently being unable to do anything of itself. It remains in the position it was when seized by the rapture, whether standing or sitting, or whether with the hands opened or closed. Although once in a while the senses fail (sometimes it happened to me that they failed completely), this occurs rarely and for only a short time. But ordinarily the soul is disoriented. Even though it can't do anything of itself with

regard to exterior things, it doesn't fail to understand and hear as though it were listening to something coming from far off. I do not say that it hears and understands when it is at the height of the rapture (I say "height" to refer to the times when the faculties are lost to other things because of their intense union with God), for then, in my opinion, it neither sees, nor hears, nor feels. But as I said in speaking of the previous prayer of union,¹⁶ this complete transformation of the soul in God lasts only a short time; but while it lasts no faculty is felt, nor does the soul know what is happening in this prayer. Perhaps it doesn't know this because God doesn't want us to understand this while on earth; He knows we are incapable of doing so. I have seen this for myself.

19. Your Reverence will ask how it is that the rapture sometimes lasts so many hours and occurs so often. What happens in my case, as I said in speaking of the previous prayer, is that the rapture is experienced at intervals. The soul is often absorbed or, to put it better, the Lord absorbs it in Himself suspending all the faculties for a while and then, afterward, holding only the will suspended. It seems to me that the activity of these other two faculties is like that of the little pointer on the sundial that never stops. But when the Sun of justice wants to, He makes the faculties stop. This suspension of the two faculties, I say, is brief. But since the loving impulse and elevation of the spirit was great, the will remains absorbed—even though these return to their noisy way—and, like the lord over all, causes those effects in the body.¹⁷ Although the other two restless faculties desire to hinder it, they are the only enemies because the sense faculties do not hinder it. The will causes these sense faculties to be suspended because the Lord desires it so. For most of the time the eyes are closed even though we may not desire to close them; and if they are sometimes open, as I have already mentioned,¹⁸ the soul doesn't notice or advert to what it sees.

20. What it can do through its own power is much less in this prayer; and when the two faculties are again suspended in the union, there isn't much to do. For this reason whoever receives this favor from the Lord should not become disconsolate on seeing

that the body is so bound for many hours and the intellect and the memory sometimes distracted. True, these faculties are ordinarily absorbed in the praises of God or in desiring to comprehend and understand what they have undergone — and even for this they are not fully awake but are like a person who has slept and dreamed for a long while and still hasn't completely awakened.

21. I'm explaining this at such length because I know that there are now, even in this place,¹⁹ persons to whom the Lord grants these favors. If those who guide them have not gone through this themselves, it may perhaps seem to these guides, especially if they aren't learned men, that these persons are as though dead during the rapture. And, as I shall say afterward,²⁰ what these persons suffer when their confessors do not understand them is a pity. Perhaps I don't know what I'm talking about. Your Reverence will understand whether I succeed in explaining myself since the Lord has already given you experience of this rapture — although since you haven't been experiencing it for a long time, perhaps you haven't observed it as much as I have.

Thus, however hard I try to stir, there is not strength enough in the body for a good while to be able to do so; the soul carries off with it all this strength. Frequently the body is made healthy and stronger — for it was really sick and full of great sufferings — because something wonderful is given to it in that prayer. The Lord sometimes desires, as I say, that the body enjoy it since the body is now obedient to what the soul desires. After the soul returns to itself — if the rapture has been intense — it goes about for a day or two, or even three, with the faculties absorbed or as though stupefied; it seems to be outside itself.

22. From this prayer comes the pain of having to return to everyday life; in this prayer wings sprout enabling one to fly with ease; the fledgling has shed its down; in this prayer Christ's banner is now completely raised. It seems just as though the custodian of this fortress climbs, or is taken up, to the highest tower to raise the banner for God. He looks at those below as one who is out of danger. He no longer fears dangers but rather desires them as someone who in a certain manner receives assurance there of victory. In it the soul sees very clearly how

little everything here below should be esteemed and the trifle that it is. Whoever stands upon a height sees many things. The soul no longer wants to desire, nor would it want to have free will—and this is what I beg the Lord. It gives Him the keys of its will.

Behold now the gardener is raised to the position of custodian. He desires to do nothing but the will of the Lord; nor does he want to be lord of himself or of anything—not even of a pear-tree in this garden. If there is something good in the garden, His Majesty distributes it. From here on the soul desires nothing for itself; it wants its actions to be in complete conformity with His glory and His will.

23. And the truth of the matter is that if the raptures are authentic, all of this takes place; the soul receives the effects and benefits that were mentioned. If these effects are not present, I would greatly doubt that the raptures come from God; on the contrary, I would fear lest they be caused by the rabies, as St. Vincent observed.²¹ I understand and have seen through experience that after an hour or less the soul is left with such freedom and dominion over all things that it doesn't know itself. It sees clearly that the good effects don't belong to it. It doesn't know how so much good was given it, but it well understands the tremendous benefit that each of these raptures bears with it. There is no one who believes this if they haven't experienced it. Thus they don't believe the poor soul, because they have seen its wretchedness—and now so quickly see it strive after things demanding such courage. For soon the soul becomes obsessed with serving the Lord not just a little but as much as it can. They think this is a temptation and foolishness. Were they to understand that these desires don't spring from the soul but from the Lord to whom it has given the keys of its will, they wouldn't be surprised.

24. I have the opinion that a soul that reaches this state no longer speaks or does anything for itself. This sovereign King takes care of all that it has to do. Oh, God help me, how clearly the meaning of the psalm is seen here; and how right are all those who long for the wings of a dove!²² It is clearly understood that the flight is given to the spirit so that it may be elevated above

every creature—and above itself first of all. The flight is an easy flight, a delightful one, a flight without noise.

25. How great is the dominion of that soul brought here by the Lord; it beholds everything without being ensnared! How ashamed it feels of the time when it was ensnared! How frightened of its blindness! What pity it feels for those who are still in this blindness, especially if they are persons of prayer whom God already favors! It would want to cry out in order to make known how deceived they are—sometimes it even does so, and a thousand persecutions rain down upon its head. They consider this person lacking in humility, especially if she is a woman, and point out that she desires to teach the one from whom she should be learning. As a result they condemn this soul—and with reason—because they don't know the loving impulse that moves it. For at times the soul can't help but disillusion—nor endure not disillusioning—those whom it loves and desires to see freed from the prison of this life, since the life that it formerly lived was nothing else than a prisoner's life; nor does it seem to it to have been anything else than that.

26. It deplores the time in which it was concerned about its reputation and deplores the deception it suffered in believing that what the world called honor was honor. It sees how this belief about honor is the greatest lie and that all of us are involved in it. It understands that authentic honor stands not with falsehood but with truth, judging what is something to be something, and what is nothing to be nothing, since everything that comes to an end is nothing and less than nothing and is not pleasing to God.

27. The soul laughs to itself over the time when it esteemed money and coveted it, although in this matter of coveting money, I don't think I ever—and this is true—confessed a fault; but it was fault enough to have esteemed it. If with money I could have bought the good I now see in myself, I would have esteemed it highly; but I see that this good is won by giving up everything. What is it we buy with this money we desire? Is it something valuable? Is it something lasting? Oh, why do we desire it? Miserable is the rest achieved that costs so dearly. Frequently one obtains hell with money and buys everlasting fire and pain

without end. Oh, if everyone would consider it unprofitable dirt, how harmoniously would the world proceed, how many lawsuits would be avoided! What friendship there would be among all if there were no self-interest about honor and money! I think this absence of self-interest would solve all problems.

28. The soul sees such great blindness in pleasures and how with them one buys trouble — even for this life — and worry. What restlessness! What little happiness! What vain labor! In this prayer it sees not only serious faults and cobwebs in its soul but any speck of dust no matter how small because the sun is very bright. And so, no matter how much a soul labors to become perfect, if this Sun truly takes hold of it, everything is seen as very turbid. The soul is like water in a glass: the water looks very clear if the sun doesn't shine on it; but when the sun shines on it, it seems to be full of dust particles. This comparison is an exact one. Before being in this ecstasy the soul thinks it is careful about not offending God and that it is doing what it can in conformity with its strength. But once it is brought into prayer, which this Sun of justice bestows on it and which opens its eyes, it sees so many dust particles that it would want to close its eyes again. It is not yet so much a child of this powerful eagle that it can gaze steadily at this sun. But for the little time that it holds its eyes open, it sees that it is itself filled with mud. It recalls the psalm that says: *Who will be just in Your Presence?*²³

29. When it beholds this divine Sun, the brightness dazzles it; when it looks at itself, the mud covers its eyes; blind is this little dove. So, very frequently, it is left totally blind, absorbed, frightened, and in a swoon from the many grandeurs that it sees. In this stage true humility is gained so that the soul doesn't care at all about saying good things of itself, nor that others say them. The Lord, not the soul, distributes the fruit of the garden, and so nothing sticks to its hands. All the good it possesses is directed to God; if it says something about itself, it does so for God's glory. It knows that it owns nothing in the garden; and even should it desire to ignore this truth, it can't. Whether it wants to or not, it sees with its own eyes that the Lord makes it close them to all the things of the world so that it may keep them open for the understanding of truths.

Chapter 21

Continues and concludes the discussions of this last degree of prayer. Tells about what the soul that experiences this prayer feels upon returning to life in the world and about the light the Lord gave it concerning the world's illusions. It contains good doctrine.

TO FINISH NOW WHAT I WAS DISCUSSING,¹ I say that there is no need here for the consent of this soul. It has already given itself to God, and it knows that it has willingly surrendered itself into His hands and that it cannot deceive Him, because He is aware of all things. Matters aren't as they are here on earth, for all of earthly life is filled with deception and duplicity: when you think you have won a friend, according to what is shown you, you afterward come to understand that that was all a lie. It isn't possible anymore to live in the midst of such intrigue, especially present where there is something to be gained.

Blessed is the soul the Lord brings to the understanding of truth! Oh, how fit a state this is for kings! How much more worthwhile it would be for them to strive for this stage of prayer rather than for great dominion! What righteousness there would be in the kingdom! What evils they would avoid and have avoided! In this stage one does not fear to lose one's life or honor for the love of God! What a great blessing this is for anyone who has a greater obligation to look after the honor of God than do all those who are subordinate, since these latter must follow their kings! For one fraction of an increase in faith and for having given some light to the heretics such a king would be willing to lose a thousand kingdoms—and rightly so; for the gain would be far greater: a kingdom without an end, which, when the soul tastes only one drop of its water, makes everything here below seem repulsive. How much more if the soul be immersed in this water?

2. O Lord! Were You to give me the office by which I could shout this aloud, they would not believe me, as they do not believe many who know how to say this better than I; but at least it would be satisfying to me. It seems to me I would have held my life in little account in order to make known only one of these

truths; I don't know what I might have done afterward, for I am not trustworthy. In spite of what I am, I experience great consuming impulses to tell these truths to those who are rulers. When I can do no more, I turn to You, my Lord, to beg of You a remedy for all. And You know well that I would very willingly dispossess myself of the favors You have granted me and give them to the kings, providing I could remain in a state in which I do not offend You; because I know that it would then be impossible for them to consent to the things that are now consented to, nor would these favors fail to bring the greatest blessings.

3. O my God! Give kings an understanding of their obligations. For You have desired to point these kings out on earth in such a way that I have even heard it said that there are signs in heaven when You take one away.² Indeed, at the thought of this my devotion increases, that You, my King, desire that even by such happenings they realize that they must be imitators of You in life since at their death there is a sign in heaven, as when You died.

4. I am becoming very bold. Tear this up if it sounds bad to your Reverence and believe me that I would say it better in person if I could, or if I thought they would believe me, for I very earnestly commend them to God and would like to be of some help. Everything makes the soul risk its life; I frequently desire to be without life, and the risk to gain much costs but little. There is no one now living who sees directly the great illusion in which we walk and the blindness we suffer.

5. Once the soul has reached this stage, what it possesses for God is not only desires; His Majesty gives it the strength to put these desires into practice. There is nothing that comes to mind that it thinks would be of service to Him that it wouldn't venture to do; and the cost to it is nothing, because, as I say,³ it sees clearly that everything other than pleasing God is nothing. The trouble is that for persons as useless as myself there are few opportunities to do something. May You be pleased, my God, that there come a time in which I may be able to repay You even one mite of all I owe You. Ordain, Lord, as You wish, how this servant of Yours may in some manner serve You. Others were women, and they have done heroic things for love

of You. I'm not good for anything but talk, and so You don't desire, my God, to put me to work; everything adds up to just words and desires about how much I must serve, and even in this I don't have freedom, because I might perhaps fail in everything. Fortify my soul and dispose it first, Good of all goods and my Jesus, and then ordain ways in which I might do something for You, for there is no longer anyone who can suffer to receive so much and not repay anything. Cost what it may, Lord, do not desire that I come into Your presence with hands so empty, since the reward must be given in conformity with one's deeds. Here is my life, here is my honor and my will. I have given all to You, I am Yours, make use of me according to Your will. I see clearly, Lord, the little I'm capable of. But having reached You, having climbed to this watchtower, I see truths. I can do all things, providing You do not leave me. Were You to leave, for however short a time, I would return to where I was, which was in hell.

6. Oh, how painful it is for a soul who finds itself in this stage to have to return to dealing with everything, to behold and see the face of this so poorly harmonized life, to waste time in taking care of bodily needs, sleeping, and eating! Everything wearies it; it doesn't know how to flee; it sees itself captured and in chains. Then it feels more truly the misery of life and the captivity we endure because of our bodies. It knows the reason St. Paul had for beseeching God to be liberated from the body;⁴ it cries out with him; it begs God for freedom, as I have mentioned at other times.⁵ But in this state the impulse is often so great that it seems the soul wants to leave the body and go in search of this freedom since there is no one else who will free it. It goes about as one sold into a foreign land, and what wearies it most is that it doesn't find many who will complain with it and beg for this freedom; rather, what is more common is the desire to live. Oh, if only we were not bound to anything, if our satisfaction were not derived from any earthly thing, how the pain experienced from always living without Him and the desire to enjoy the true life would temper the fear of death!

7. If someone like myself, to whom the Lord has given this light (in spite of such lukewarm charity and such uncertainty

about true rest on account of my not having merited it through my deeds), often feels so strongly the fact of my exile, I at times wonder what the feeling of the saints must have been. What must St. Paul and the Magdalene and others like them have undergone, in whom this fire of the love of God had grown so intense? It must have been a continual martyrdom.

It seems to me that those who bring me some relief, and in whose company I find rest, are persons who I find have themselves these desires—I mean desires accompanied by works. I say accompanied by works because there are some persons who, in their own opinion, are detached; so they publish the fact. And the fact of their detachment should be true since their state demands it as well as the many years that have passed since some of them have set out on the way of perfection. But this soul recognizes well, from far off, those who have only a lot of words and those who have confirmed their words with works. It understands the small amount of good that the former do and the great amount that the latter do—and this is something that anyone who has experience sees very clearly.

8. I have already mentioned these effects that the raptures that are from God's Spirit cause; the truth is that these effects are greater or less. I say less, because in the beginning, even though the rapture causes these effects, they are not proven with deeds; thus it cannot be determined whether they are present. The raptures also make perfection grow, and they take away every trace of a cobweb—and this requires time. The more that love and humility grow, the greater the fragrance these flowers of virtues give off, both for oneself and for others. It is true that in one of these raptures the Lord can work in the soul in such a way that only a little labor is still required in order that it reach perfection, for no one who doesn't have this experience will be able to believe what the Lord gives the soul in this stage. In my opinion no effort of ours brings us to this perfection. I don't deny that someone with the help of God, making use of the means mentioned by authors who have written about prayer, its principles, and properties, will by means of many efforts reach perfection and great detachment. But they will not do so in as short a time as it takes for the Lord to accomplish it in this stage,

without anything done on our part. He definitely draws the soul up from the earth and gives it dominion over every earthly thing, even though there may be no more merits in it than there were in me—and I cannot overstress this absence of merit in me, because I had hardly any.

9. Why His Majesty does this is because He wants to, and He does it in the way He wants to; and even though the soul may not be ready, His Majesty prepares it to receive the good He gives it. Wherefore He doesn't always give raptures because souls have merited them through good cultivation of the garden (although it is very certain that anyone who does take good care of the garden and strives to be detached will not fail to be favored), but sometimes it is His will to show His greatness on very wretched soil, as I have said.⁶ He so prepares the soul for every good that it seems it is not longer capable, after a fashion, of turning back to its former life of offending God. Its thought becomes so accustomed to understanding what the real truth is that everything else seems to it to be child's play. It sometimes laughs to itself when it sees seriously religious and prayerful persons making a big issue out of some rules of etiquette which it has already trampled under foot. They claim that this is a matter of discretion and of the prestige accompanying their office so that they might bring about more good. The soul knows very well that they would bring about more good in one day than they would in ten years if for the love of God they thought a lot less of the prestige of their office.

10. Thus it lives a laborious life and always with the cross, but it continues to grow rapidly. When it is observed by its companions it seems to be at the summit. Within a short while it is much improved because God always goes on favoring it more. It is His soul; it is He who has taken it into His charge, and thus He illumines it. For it seems that by His assistance. He is ever guarding it from offending Him and favoring it and awakening it to His service.

When my soul reached this stage where God granted it such a great favor, the evil in me disappeared, and the Lord gave me strength to break away from it. It didn't bother me to be amid the occasions of falling and with people who formerly

distracted me any more than if there were no occasions at all; what used to do me harm was helping me. All things were a means for my knowing and loving God more, for seeing what I owed Him, and for regretting what I had been.

11. I understood well that these effects didn't come from me, nor did I gain them through my diligence, for there wasn't even time for that. His Majesty solely out of His goodness had given me fortitude for them.

From the time the Lord began to grant me the favor of these raptures up until now, this fortitude has always been increasing; and in His goodness He has held me by His hand so that I might not turn back. Nor does it seem to me that I do hardly anything on my part—and that is true; I understand clearly that it is the Lord who does everything. Hence it seems to me that souls upon whom the Lord bestows these favors and who receive them with humility and fear—always understanding that it is the Lord Himself who grants them and that we ourselves do almost nothing—could be placed in the company of any kind of people. Even if these people are distracted and corrupt, the soul will not be disturbed or enticed in anything; on the contrary, this experience will help it and serve as a means to greater progress. These are now strong souls the Lord chooses to benefit others, even though their fortitude doesn't come from themselves. Little by little, as the soul approaches the Lord in this stage, He communicates to it very deep secrets.

12. Here in this ecstasy are received the true revelations and the great favors and visions—and all serves to humiliate and strengthen the soul, to lessen its esteem for the things of this life, and to make it know more clearly the grandeurs of the reward the Lord has prepared for those who serve Him.

May it please His Majesty that the extraordinary generosity He has shown this miserable sinner serve to encourage and rouse those who read this to abandon completely everything for God. If His Majesty repays so fully that even in this life the reward and gain possessed by those who serve Him is clearly seen, what will this reward be in the next life?

Chapter 22

Treats of how safe a path it is for contemplatives not to raise the spirit to high things unless the Lord raises it and of how the humanity of Christ must be the means to the most sublime contemplation. Tells about a mistaken theory she once tried to follow. This chapter is very beneficial.

THERE IS ONE THING I want to say that in my opinion is important. If your Reverence thinks it is good, it can be used for giving advice since it could happen that you will have need of it. In some books written on prayer it is said that even though the soul cannot reach this state of prayer by itself, since the work is an entirely supernatural one that the Lord effects in the soul, it will be able to help itself by lifting the spirit above all creatures and humbly raising it up, and that the soul can do this after having passed many years in the purgative life while it is advancing in the illuminative. (I don't really know why they say illuminative; I understand it to refer to those who are advancing.) They give strong advice to rid oneself of all corporeal images and to approach contemplation of the Divinity. They say that in the case of those who are advancing, these corporeal images, even when referring to the humanity of Christ, are an obstacle or impediment to the most perfect contemplation. In support of this theory they quote what the Lord said to the Apostles about the coming of the Holy Spirit—I mean at the time of His Ascension.¹ They think that since this work is entirely spiritual, any corporeal thing can hinder or impede it, that one should try to think of God in a general way, that He is everywhere, and that we are immersed in Him.

This is good, it seems to me, sometimes; but to withdraw completely from Christ or that this divine Body be counted in a balance with our own miseries or with all creation, I cannot endure. May it please His Majesty that I be able to explain myself.

2. I am not contradicting this theory; those who hold it are learned and spiritual men and they know what they are saying, and God leads souls by many paths and ways. I want to speak now of the way He led my soul—I'm not considering other ways—and of the danger I found myself in for wanting to put

into practice what I was reading. I really believe that anyone who reaches the experience of union without passing beyond—I mean to raptures and visions and other favors God grants to souls—will think what is said in these books is the best practice, as I did. But if I should have kept to that practice, I believe I would never have arrived at where I am now because in my opinion the practice is a mistaken one. Now it could be that I am the mistaken one, but I'll speak of what happened to me.

3. I had no master and was reading these books in which I thought I was gradually coming to understand something. (And afterward I understood that if the Lord didn't show me, I was able to learn little from books, because there was nothing I understood until His Majesty gave me understanding through experience, nor did I know what I was doing.) As a result, when I began to experience something of supernatural prayer, I mean of the prayer of quiet, I strove to turn aside from everything corporeal, although I did not dare lift up the soul—since I was always so wretched, I saw that doing so would be boldness. But it seemed to me that I felt the presence of God, as was so, and I strove to recollect myself in His presence. This is a pleasing prayer, if God helps in it, and the delight is great. Since I felt that benefit and consolation, there was no one who could have made me return to the humanity of Christ; as a matter of fact, I thought the humanity was an impediment. O Lord of my soul and my Good, Jesus Christ crucified! At no time do I recall this opinion I had without feeling pain; it seems to me I became a dreadful traitor—although in ignorance.

4. I had been so devoted all my life to Christ (for I held this opinion toward the end, that is, just before the Lord granted me these favors of raptures and visions,² and I didn't remain long in so extreme a practice of it); and thus I always returned to my custom of rejoicing in this Lord, especially when I received Communion. I wanted to keep ever before my eyes a painting or image of Him since I was unable to keep Him as engraved in my soul as I desired. Is it possible, my Lord, that it entered my mind for even an hour that You would be an impediment to my greater good? Where have all my blessings come from but from You? I don't want to think I was at fault in this, because

it deeply saddens me—and certainly it was ignorance. Thus You desired, in Your goodness, to remedy the matter by sending me someone who would draw me away from this error—and afterward by letting me see You so many times, as I shall explain later on—³ so that I would understand more clearly how great the error is, and tell many persons what I just said, and put it in writing here.

5. In my opinion this practice is why many souls, when they reach the prayer of union, do not advance further or attain a very great freedom of spirit. It seems to me there are two reasons on which I can base my thinking. Perhaps I'm saying nothing, but what I'm about to say I've seen through experience. My soul was in a very bad state until the Lord gave it light. All its consolations were coming in small portions, and, once they were passed, it didn't then have the companionship of Christ to help in trials and temptations. The first reason¹ is lack of humility in such persons; so small is this lack and so hidden and concealed that it goes unnoticed. Who is so proud and miserable—as I am—that they will not, after having labored the whole of life with as many penances, prayers, and persecutions as can be imagined, feel greatly enriched and well paid when the Lord allows them to remain at the foot of the cross with St. John?² Not to feel greatly enriched by this could happen only to stupid persons like myself, for in every way I was losing when I should have been gaining.

6. If our nature or health doesn't allow us to think always about the Passion, since to do so would be arduous, who will prevent us from being with Him in His risen state? We have Him so near in the Blessed Sacrament, where He is already glorified and where we don't have to gaze upon Him as being so tired and worn out, bleeding, wearied by His journeys, persecuted by those for whom He did so much good, and not believed in by the Apostles. Certainly there is no one who can endure thinking all the time about the many trials He suffered. Behold Him here without suffering, full of glory, before ascending into heaven, strengthening some, encouraging others, our companion in the most Blessed Sacrament; it doesn't seem it was in His power to leave us for even a moment. And what a pity it was for me

to have left You, my Lord, under the pretext of serving You more! When I was offending You I didn't know You; but how, once knowing You, did I think I could gain more by this path! Oh, what a bad road I was following, Lord! Now it seems to me I was walking on no path until You brought me back, for in seeing You at my side I saw all blessings. There is no trial that it wasn't good for me to suffer once I looked at You as You were, standing before the judges. Whoever lives in the presence of so good a friend and excellent a leader, who went ahead of us to be the first to suffer, can endure all things. The Lord helps us, strengthens us, and never fails; He is a true friend. And I see clearly, and I saw afterward, that God desires that if we are going to please Him and receive His great favors, we must do so through the most sacred humanity of Christ, in whom He takes His delight.⁶ Many, many times have I perceived this truth through experience. The Lord has told it to me. I have definitely seen that we must enter by this gate⁷ if we desire His sovereign Majesty to show us great secrets.

7. Thus your Reverence and lordship⁸ should desire no other path even if you are at the summit of contemplation; on this road you walk safely. This Lord of ours is the one through whom all blessings come to us. He will teach us these things. In beholding His life we find that He is the best example. What more do we desire than to have such a good friend at our side, who will not abandon us in our labors and tribulations, as friends in the world do? Blessed are they who truly love Him and always keep Him at their side! Let us consider the glorious St. Paul: it doesn't seem that any other name fell from his lips than that of Jesus, as coming from one who kept the Lord close to his heart. Once I had come to understand this truth, I carefully considered the lives of some of the saints, the great contemplatives, and found that they hadn't taken any other path: St. Francis demonstrates this through the stigmata; St. Anthony of Padua, with the Infant; St. Bernard found his delight in the humanity; St. Catherine of Siena—and many others about whom your Reverence knows more than I.

8. This practice of turning aside from corporeal things must be good, certainly, since such spiritual persons advise it. But,

in my opinion, the soul should be very advanced because until then it is clear that the Creator must be sought through creatures. Everything depends on the favor the Lord grants to each soul; this is not what I'm concerned with. What I wanted to explain was that the most sacred humanity of Christ must not be counted in a balance with other corporeal things. And may this point be well understood, for I should like to know how to explain myself.

9. When God desires to suspend all the faculties, as we have seen in the kinds of prayer that were mentioned,⁹ it is clear that, even though we may not so desire, this presence is taken away. Then let it be so—gladly; blessed be such a loss that enables us to enjoy more that which it seems is lost. For then the soul is occupied completely in loving the One whom the intellect labored to know, and loves what it didn't understand, and rejoices in so great a joy that it couldn't have experienced it save by losing itself in order, as I say, to gain itself. But that we should skillfully and carefully accustom ourselves to avoid striving with all our strength to keep this most sacred humanity always present (and please the Lord it would be present always), this, I say, is what I don't think is good. The soul is left floating in the air, as they say; it seems it has no support no matter how much it may think it is full of God. It is an important thing that while we are living and are human we have human support. This disadvantage of not having human support leads to the other reason I referred to. With regard to the first reason, I already began to say¹⁰ that there is a small lack of humility in wanting to raise the soul up before the Lord raises it, in not being content to meditate on something so valuable, and in wanting to be Mary before having worked with Martha.¹¹ When the Lord desires to raise up the soul, even if He does so from the first day, there is no reason for fear; but let us restrain ourselves as I believe I said before. This little speck of lack of humility, even though it seems to be nothing, does much harm to progress in contemplation.

10. Returning to the second point, we are not angels but we have a body. To desire to be angels while we are on earth—and as much on earth as I was—is foolishness. Ordinarily, thought

needs to have some support. If at times the soul goes out of itself or goes about so full of God that it has no need of any created thing to become recollected, this isn't so usual. When one is in the midst of business matters, and in times of persecutions and trials, when one can't maintain so much quietude, and in times of dryness, Christ is a very good friend because we behold Him as man and see Him with weaknesses and trials—and He is company for us. Once we have the habit, it is very easy to find Him present at our side, although there will come times when neither the one experience nor the other will be possible. In such an instance a good attitude is the one I've already mentioned:¹² not to allow ourselves to be seekers of spiritual consolations. Thus, embracing the cross, come what may, is an important thing. This Lord was deprived of every consolation; they left Him alone in His trials. Let us not abandon Him, for He will give us better support than our own efforts that we might ascend higher, and He will absent Himself when He sees such absence is fitting and when He desires to draw the soul out of itself, as I said.¹³

11. God is very pleased to see a soul that humbly takes His son as mediator and that loves this Son so much that even when His Majesty desires to raise it to very lofty contemplation, as I have said,¹⁴ it is aware of its unworthiness, saying with St. Peter: *Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.*¹⁵

Such has been my experience; it's the way God has led my soul. Others will journey, as I've said,¹⁶ by another short cut. What I have come to understand is that this whole groundwork of prayer is based on humility and that the more a soul lowers itself in prayer the more God raises it up. I don't recall His ever having granted me one of the very notable favors of which I shall speak later if not at a time when I was brought to nothing at the sight of my wretchedness. And, so as to help me know myself, His Majesty even strove to give me an understanding of things that I wouldn't have known how to imagine. I hold that when the soul does something on its own to help itself in this prayer of union, even though this may at first seem beneficial, it will very soon fall again since it doesn't have a good foundation. I fear that it will never attain true poverty of spirit, which means

being at rest in labors and dryness and not seeking consolation or comfort in prayer—for earthly consolation has already been abandoned—but seeking consolation in trials for love of Him who always lived in the midst of them. Although if some consolation is felt, it shouldn't cause the disturbance and pain it does to some persons who think that if they aren't always working with the intellect and striving for devotion all is lost—as though so great a blessing could be merited by their labor. I don't say that they shouldn't strive carefully to remain in God's presence, but that if they can't even get a good thought, as I've mentioned elsewhere,¹⁷ they shouldn't kill themselves. We are useless servants, what do we think we can do?

12. But the Lord desires us to recognize our uselessness and become like the little donkeys that turn the waterwheel I've mentioned:¹⁸ although their eyes are blinded and they don't know what they are doing, they obtain more water than the gardener does with all his activity. People must walk along this path in freedom, placing themselves in the hands of God. If His Majesty should desire to raise us to the position of one who is an intimate and shares His secrets, we ought to accept gladly; if not, we ought to serve in the humbler tasks and not sit down in the best place,¹⁹ as I've once said. God is more careful than we are, and He knows what is fitting for each one. What do persons gain by governing themselves when they have given their wills entirely to God? In my opinion, much less is allowed here than in the first degree of prayer, and the harm that can come is much greater. These blessings are supernatural. If individuals have bad voices, the effort to sing does them no good no matter how hard they try; if God desires to give them good voices, there is no need beforehand that there be any shouting. Thus, with souls surrendered to His will, yet trusting in His greatness, let us always beseech God to grant us favors. Since the soul receives permission to remain at the feet of Christ, it should endeavor not to leave that place. Let it remain there as it desires; let it imitate the Magdalene, for if it is strong, God will lead it into the desert.²⁰

13. Thus, until your Reverence finds someone with more experience than I, and who knows better, you should keep to this

opinion. If there are persons who are beginning to find delight in God, do not believe them if they think that by helping themselves they are making progress and finding more consolation. Oh, when God so wills, how He is revealed openly without these little helps from us! For however much we may do, He carries off the spirit as a giant would a piece of straw—and no resistance suffices. What a strange belief it is, that the toad should expect to fly of itself whenever it wants. And it seems to me to be even more difficult and troublesome for our spirit to raise itself up if God doesn't raise it, for it is weighed down with the earth and a thousand obstacles, and wanting to fly profits it little. Although flying is more natural to it than to the toad, it is so bogged down in the mud that through its own faults it lost this ability.

14. Well I want to conclude by saying this: As often as we think of Christ we should recall the love with which He bestowed on us so many favors and what great love God showed us in giving us a pledge like this of His love, for love begets love. Even if we are at the very beginning and are very wretched, let us strive to keep this divine love always before our eyes and to waken ourselves to love. If at some time the Lord should favor us by impressing this love on our hearts, all will become easy for us, and we shall carry out our tasks quickly and without much effort. May His Majesty give this love—since He knows how fitting it is for us—on account of the love He bore us and on account of His glorious Son, who demonstrated His love for us at so great a cost to Himself, amen.

15. There is one thing I should like to ask your Reverence. When the Lord begins to grant such sublime favors to a soul, as is that of placing it in perfect contemplation, rightly speaking it should at once become completely perfect. Certainly this ought to be so because whoever receives so great a favor should not have to desire earthly consolations any more. Well why, then, as the soul grows accustomed to receiving favors and raptures, does it seem that the more favors it receives the more detached it becomes? For in one moment the Lord can leave it sanctified just as, with the passing of time, He afterward leaves it with perfection in the virtues?

This is what I want to know since I don't know what the answer is. What I do know well is the difference between the fortitude God leaves when in the beginning the favor lasts no longer than the blinking of an eye, and is almost not felt save in its effects, and that which He leaves when it lasts longer. Often it seems to me the reason is that the soul doesn't dispose itself completely until the Lord, fostering it little by little, gives it the determination and strength of an adult so that it might trample everything underfoot. What He did in a short time for the Magdalene His Majesty does for other persons in conformity with what they themselves do in order to allow Him to work. Let us not cease to believe that even in this life God gives the hundredfold.²¹

16. I was also thinking about this comparison. Since what is given to those who are further advanced is totally the same as that given to them in the beginning, we can compare it to a food that many persons eat. Those who eat just a little are left only with a good taste in their mouth for a short while; those who eat more, receive nourishment; those who eat a great deal receive life and strength. So frequently can these latter eat and so filled are they from this food of life that they no longer eat anything that satisfies them other than this food. They see how beneficial it is to them, and their taste has so adapted to this sweetness that it would prefer not living to having to eat other things that serve for no more than to take away the pleasing taste the good food leaves behind.

Neither is conversation with a saintly companion as beneficial when it lasts only one day as when it lasts many; and if it is prolonged over many, it will make us similar to the other—if God favors us. In the end, everything depends on what His Majesty desires and to whom He desires to give this food. But it is very important for whoever is already beginning to receive this favor to have the determination to become completely detached and to esteem the favor as it should be esteemed.

17. It also seems to me that His Majesty is testing to see who it is who loves Him; He tests now this one, now another, by revealing who He is with a superb delight and by quickening faith—if it is dead—in what He will give us, saying: “Look, this

is but a drop from the vast sea of blessings." He does this so as to leave nothing undone for those who love Him; in the measure He sees that they receive Him, so He gives and is given. He loves whoever loves Him; how good a beloved! how good a friend! O Lord of my soul, who has the words to explain what You give to those who trust in You and to explain what those lose who reach this state and yet remain with themselves! Do not desire a loss like this, Lord, since You do so much in coming to a dwelling place as shabby as mine. May You be blessed forever and ever!

18. If your Reverence discusses with spiritual persons these things I have written on prayer, I again beg you that these persons be truly spiritual. For if they know only one road or have stalled in the middle, they will not be able to understand. There are some whom God right from the start leads by a very sublime path, and it seems to them that thus others will be able to profit by this path, quiet the intellect, and not make use of corporeal means, but in so doing those others will be left as dry as sticks. Some who have experienced a little quietude immediately think that since they have this quiet they can raise themselves up; and instead of advancing they slip backward, as I have said.²² So experience and discretion are necessary in all matters. May the Lord in His goodness give them to us.

Chapter 23

Returns to the account of her life, of how she began to seek greater perfection, and by what means. For persons trying to guide souls that practice prayer it is helpful to know how these souls must proceed in the beginning. How she profited from knowing about this.

I NOW WANT TO RETURN to where I left off about my life,¹ for I think I delayed more than I should have so that what follows would be better understood. This is another, new book from here on—I mean another, new life. The life dealt with up to this point was mine; the one I lived from the point where I began to explain these things about prayer is the one

God lived in me—according to the way it appears to me—because I think it would have been impossible in so short a time to get rid of so many bad habits and deeds. May the Lord be praised who freed me from myself.

2. Now, then, when I began to avoid occasions and devote myself to prayer, the Lord, as one who desired, so it seemed, that I be willing to receive them, started to grant me favors. His Majesty began to give me the prayer of quiet very habitually—and often, of union—which lasted a long while. Since at that time other women had fallen into serious illusions and deceptions caused by the devil,² I began to be afraid. I experienced wonderful delight and sweetness, and often without being able to avoid it, and in addition I was aware of the greatest assurance that this delight was from God, especially when I was in the prayer—and I observed that I came out of it much improved and strengthened. But after a little distraction I began to fear and wonder whether the devil, making me think the experience was good, wanted me to suspend the intellect so that he could draw me away from mental prayer and so that I might not think upon the Passion or benefit from the use of the intellect, which seemed to me a great loss because I didn't understand this prayer.

3. Moreover, since His Majesty desired now to enlighten me so that I might no longer offend Him and might know my great debt to Him, this fear increased in such a way that it made me diligently seek out spiritual persons to consult. I had already heard about some because they had come to this town and were members of the Society of Jesus³ of which—without knowing any of the members—I was very fond, only from hearing about the mode of life and prayer they followed. But I didn't feel worthy to speak to them or strong enough to obey them, and this made me more fearful; it would have been a difficult thing for me to converse with them and yet be what I was.

4. I went about like this for some time until, after a great struggle within me and many tears, I resolved both to talk to a spiritual person (to ask him what prayer it was I was experiencing and to enlighten me if I were going astray) and to do all I could so as not to offend God. For, as I just said,⁴ the lack of fortitude I saw in myself made me so timid. What a terrible mistake, God

help me, that in wanting to be good I withdrew from good! The devil must meddle a great deal in this matter when virtue is beginning; I couldn't make the fear go away. He knows that the complete remedy for a soul lies in consulting the friends of God; thus I didn't have the determination to do this. I was waiting to amend first, as when I abandoned prayer,⁵ and perhaps I would never have done so, because I had fallen into little bad habits to such an extent that I was unable to understand they were bad. I needed the help of others and that they give me a hand to lift me up. Blessed be the Lord, for, finally, His was the first.

5. Since I saw that my fear was increasing—because the prayer was increasing—it seemed to me there was in the prayer either some great good or some terrible evil. I understood well that I was already experiencing something supernatural because sometimes I was unable to resist; to have it whenever I wanted was out of the question. I thought to myself there would be no remedy if I didn't strive to have a clean conscience and withdraw from every occasion, even if it concerned venial sins. For if the prayer were from God's Spirit, there would obviously be something to gain from striving for purity of conscience; if it were from the devil, my striving to please the Lord and not offend Him could do me little harm—on the contrary, the devil would be the loser. Resolved to strive for this purity of conscience and beseeching the Lord to help me, I saw, after trying it for some days, that my soul didn't have the strength to reach such perfection alone on account of some attachments that, though in themselves were not bad, were enough to spoil everything.

6. They told me about a learned priest⁶ in this city whose goodness and edifying life the Lord had begun to make known to the people. I tried to get to speak to him through the help of a saintly gentleman⁷ who lives in this city. This gentleman is married, but he lives so exemplary and virtuous a life and is so prayerful and charitable that his goodness and perfection shine throughout the whole town. There is every reason for his renown because great good has come to many souls by means of him. He has so many talents that even though his state in life isn't a help to him, he cannot refrain from using them: he

is most intelligent and very gentle with everyone; his conversation, not at all boring, so mild and charming as well as upright and holy, is most pleasing to those with whom he deals; he directs everything toward the great good of the souls with whom he is conversing; and it doesn't seem that he has any other concern than to do for everyone what he sees is possible and to be pleasing to all.

7. Well, this blessed and holy man, with his diligence, it seems to me, was the principal means by which my soul was saved. His humility amazes me. I believe he has practiced prayer for a little less than forty years—I don't know if it's two or three years less. He lives a complete life of perfection insofar as it seems his state allows. His wife is such a great servant of God and so charitable that he is not held back by her. In sum, God chose her to be the wife of someone who He knew would be a great servant of His. Some of his relatives were married to some of mine; he also had a good deal of association with another great servant of God⁸ who was married to a cousin of mine.

8. In this way I arranged that the priest I said was such a servant of God would come to speak to me. This gentleman was a great friend of that priest whom I thought I could take as my confessor and master. When he brought him to speak to me, I was most embarrassed to find myself in the presence of so holy a man, and I gave him an account of my soul and my prayer; but I didn't want him to hear my confession. I told him I was very busy—and that was true. He began with a holy determination to guide me as though I were a strong person—for by rights I should have been so because of the prayer he observed I was experiencing—in order that I might in no way offend God. When I saw him at once so determined about little things that, as I say,⁹ I didn't have the fortitude to give up immediately and so perfectly, I was afflicted. Since I saw he was taking my soul's attachments as something I would have to die to all at once, I realized there was need for much more caution.

9. In sum, I understood that the means he gave me were not the ones by which I could remedy my situation, because they were suited to a more perfect soul. As for myself, even though I was advanced in receiving favors from God, I was very much

at the beginning with regard to virtues and mortification. Certainly, if I were to have had no one else but him to speak to, I believe my soul would never have improved. For the affliction I felt in seeing that I did not do — nor did it seem I could do — that which he told me would have been enough to make me lose hope and give up everything.

I sometimes marvel that God was not pleased that this priest, being a person who has a particular grace for beginning to lead souls to God, understand my soul and take charge of it. I see that what happened was all for my greater good, that I might get to know and deal with people as holy as are those of the Society of Jesus.

10. It was then that I arranged that the holy gentleman come sometime to see me. Here I saw his great humility, that he wished to talk to someone as wretched as myself. He began to visit me, encourage me, and tell me that I shouldn't think I could give up everything in one day, that little by little God would do the work, that he himself had been for some years unable to make a break with some very trivial things. O humility, what great blessings you bestow where you are present and on those who approach the one who possesses you! This saint (for in my opinion I can rightly call him by this name), in his humility and for my benefit, told me about his weakness, which to him seemed to be such. Considering what was in conformity with his state in life, there was no fault or imperfection — whereas my having such weaknesses would have been the greatest fault with respect to my state of life.

I do not mention this without a reason, for it seems I am going on at length about trifles; but these things are so important in beginning to help a soul and show it how to fly (for it still hasn't any wings, as they say) that no one will believe what I say save the one who has passed through it. Because I hope in God that your Reverence will be able to help many souls, I mention it here; this gentleman was my complete salvation in knowing how to cure me and in having the humility and the charity to stay with me — and patience while seeing that I wasn't making amends in everything. He proceeded with discretion little by little showing me ways to conquer the devil. I began to have such

a great love for him that there was no greater recreation for me than on the days I saw him, although they were few. When he was late, I became very worried because it then seemed to me that since I was so wretched he wasn't going to see me.

11. Since he was getting to know my very great imperfections, and they would even be sins—although after I spoke with him I made greater amends—and since I mentioned to him the favors granted me by God so that he could give me light, he told me that my imperfections were incompatible with the favors and that these gifts were bestowed on persons who were already very advanced and mortified, that he couldn't help but fear a great deal because in some things it seemed to him there was a bad spirit, although he didn't come to a definite conclusion. But he thought well of all that he understood about my prayer, and he said so. The difficulty was that I didn't know how to say either little or much about my prayer; for only recently did God give me this favor of understanding what it is and knowing how to speak about it.

12. Since this gentleman told me about his fear, and with the fear I already had, I felt greatly afflicted and shed many tears. For, certainly, I desired to please God, and I could not persuade myself that the devil was the cause. But I feared that on account of my great sins God blinded me so that I couldn't know the cause. Looking through books in order to see if I could learn how to explain the prayer I was experiencing, I found in one they called *Ascent of the Mount*,¹⁰ where it touches upon the union of the soul with God, all the signs I experienced in that not thinking of anything. This was what I was most often saying: that when I experienced that prayer I wasn't able to think of anything. I marked the pertinent passages and gave him the book so that he and the other priest I mentioned, the saintly one and servant of God, might look it over and tell me what I should do, and that if they thought I should, I would give up prayer completely—for why should I place myself in these dangers. If at the end of almost twenty years in which I practiced prayer, I showed no gain but was deceived by the devil, it would be better not to practice it—although this too would have been arduous for me because I had already experienced

what my soul was without prayer. As a result, I saw danger everywhere. I was like a person in the middle of a river trying to get out; wherever she goes she fears greater peril there; and she is almost drowning.

It is a very severe trial, this one; and I have suffered many of these, as I shall say afterward.¹¹ Although the matter may seem unimportant, perhaps it will be helpful for an understanding of how the spirit must be tried.

13. And certainly it is a great one, the trial that is suffered; and caution is necessary, especially with women, because our weakness is great, and a lot of harm could be done by telling us outright that the cause is the devil. But the matter should be considered carefully, and they should turn aside from any dangers there might be and should be counseled on the importance of keeping things secret; this secrecy is fitting.

In this respect I am speaking as one who is suffering a bitter trial because some persons with whom I have discussed my prayer are not keeping it secret, but in consulting this one and that other, they have truly done me great harm. They have spread things that should have remained very secret—these matters are not for everybody—and it seemed that I was the one who published them abroad. I believe the Lord permitted it without any fault on their part so that I might suffer. I'm not saying they spoke about what I discussed with them in confession. But since they were persons to whom because of my fears I gave an account of myself that they might enlighten me, it seemed to me they should have kept quiet. Nonetheless, I never dared to conceal anything from these persons.

Well, I'm saying that one should counsel these souls with great discretion, encouraging them and biding one's time until the Lord helps them as He did me. If I had not been so treated, the greatest harm would have been done to me because I was frightened and scared. With the serious heart trouble I had, I'm amazed that much damage wasn't done to me.

14. Since I gave them both the book as well as an account of my life and sins¹² as best I could (not through confession, since one of them was a layman, but I explained clearly how wretched I was), the two servants of God considered with great

charity and love what was fitting for me.

I awaited the answer with terrible fear; after I had recommended myself to the prayers of many persons and prayed a great deal myself during those days, one of them with much anguish came and told me that in the considered opinion of both of them the cause was the devil. He told me I should take the matter up with a priest from the Society of Jesus, that if I asked the priest, telling of my need, he would come, and that I should give an account of my whole life and state by a general confession and be very frank in all, that by the power of the sacrament of confession God would enlighten him, that these Fathers were very experienced in spiritual matters, and that I shouldn't neglect anything he might tell me, because I was in serious danger if I didn't have someone to guide me.

15. This frightened and pained me so much that I didn't know what to do; I was all tears. And while in an oratory very much afflicted, not knowing what would become of me, I read in a book—which it seems the Lord placed in my hands—what St. Paul said, that God was very faithful, that He would never let those who love Him be deceived by the devil.¹³ This consoled me very deeply.

I began to prepare my general confession and put down in writing all the good and bad things—as clear an account of my life as I knew how to give, without leaving anything out.¹⁴

I recall that after I had written it, I saw so many evils and so little of anything good that I was terribly distressed and in the greatest anguish. Also I was pained that persons in the house would see me speak with people as holy as are those of the Society of Jesus. For I was in fear of my wretchedness; it seemed to me I was going to have greater obligation to avoid evil and my pastimes, and that things would grow worse if I didn't do this. So I arranged with the sacristan and portress not to tell anyone. This proved of little avail, for it happened that when they called me someone was standing near the door who then went throughout the whole convent telling about who came to see me. But what obstacles and what fears the devil places in the path of the one who wants to reach God!

16. After I spoke with that servant of God, the Father, he said

very much so and most wise — all about my soul, as to someone who well knew this language, he explained to me what I was experiencing and greatly encouraged me. He said it was very recognizably from God's Spirit, but that it was necessary to return again to prayer, that the prayer did not have a good foundation, and that I had not begun to understand mortification (and that was true, for it doesn't seem to me I even understood the word), that I should by no means give up prayer but strive very hard since God had granted me such special favors. He wondered if the Lord didn't desire to do good for many persons through me, and said other things (for it seems he prophesied what the Lord afterward did with me) and pointed out that I would be very much at fault if I didn't respond to the favors God was granting me. In all that he said it seemed to me, according to what was impressed upon my soul, that the Holy Spirit was speaking through him in order to heal me.

17. He made me very ashamed; he guided me by means that seemed to change me completely. What a great thing it is to understand a soul! He told me that I should devote prayer each day to a phase of the Passion, that I should benefit from this prayer and dwell only on the humanity, and that I should resist those experiences of recollection and consolation as much as I could and in such a way that I would make no room for them until he told me otherwise.

18. He left me consoled and encouraged, and the Lord helped me and him to understand my situation and how I should be guided. I remained determined not to lapse from his orders in anything, and I continued to be so determined to this day. Praised be the Lord who has given me the grace to obey my confessors, even though imperfectly; they have almost always been these blessed men from the Society of Jesus — although, as I say, I have followed them imperfectly.

My soul began to improve noticeably, as I shall now describe.

Chapter 24

Continues on the same topic. Tells how her soul made progress after she began to obey, how little it helped her to resist God's favors, and how His Majesty began giving her more perfect ones.

MY SOUL WAS LEFT SO DOCILE from this confession that it seemed to me there was nothing for which I wouldn't prepare myself. As a consequence I began to make many changes, although the confessor didn't press me; rather it seemed that he thought all the changes of little importance. And this urged me more because he guided my soul by stressing the love of God and allowed freedom and used no pressure if I didn't set about doing things out of love.

So for almost two months I was trying to resist with all my might the gifts and favors of God. In exterior matters the change was apparent because the Lord already began to grant me the courage to practice some renunciation that in the judgment of persons who knew me and even of some Sisters in my own house¹ appeared too extreme. When compared with my previous way of life, this renunciation was extreme, and those who thought so were right. But as for my obligation by reason of the habit I wore and my profession, it fell short.

2. In resisting these consolations and favors of God, I gained by learning something from His Majesty. For in the past I had thought that to receive favors in prayer much seclusion was necessary, and I hardly dared to stir. Afterward I saw how little such effort mattered. The more I strove to distract myself, the more the Lord enveloped me in that sweetness and glory, which seemed to surround me so completely that there was no place to escape—and that was true. I was so careful that it pained me. The Lord was more careful in granting me favors and in revealing Himself to me; much more than usual in those two months that I might better understand it was no longer in my power to resist them.

I started again to love the most sacred humanity. Prayer began to take shape as an edifice that now had a foundation; I grew fond of more penance, for I had been negligent on account of

the severity of my illnesses. That holy man who heard my confession told me that some things could do me no harm, that perhaps God gave me so much sickness because, since I didn't do penance, His Majesty desired to give me some. He ordered me to perform some mortifications which were not very pleasing to me. I did everything because it seemed to me the Lord commanded it, and God gave him the ability to command me in such a way that I obeyed him. My soul began so to feel any offense I committed against God, however small, that if I was holding on to some superfluous thing, I could not recollect myself until I gave the thing up. I prayed a great deal that the Lord might keep me in His hands, that since He permitted me to consult with His servants He would not allow me to turn back, for it seemed to me that to turn back would have been a great crime and that they would have lost their reputations on my account.

3. At that time Father Francis² came to this place. He had been the Duke of Gandia, and some years before had given up all and entered the Society of Jesus. My confessor,³ and the gentleman I also mentioned who came to me, arranged that I might speak with him and give him an account of my prayer because I knew that he was advancing in the favors and gifts of God. Since he was one who had abandoned many things for Him, God repaid him even in this life.

Well, after he had heard me, he told me that my experience was from the Spirit of God and that it seemed to him it would no longer be good to resist, but that up to this time it had been all right, and that I should always begin prayer with an event from the Passion, but that if afterward the Lord should carry away the spirit I ought not resist Him but let His Majesty bear it away — and not strive to do so myself. As one who was well advanced he gave the medicine and the counsel, for experience in this matter is very important. He said it would be a mistake to resist any longer.

I was left greatly consoled. The gentleman too was very glad that Father Francis said it was from God, and this gentleman helped me and gave me advice in matters where he could, which were many.

4. At that time they transferred my confessor⁴ to another place. I felt his transfer very keenly, for I thought I would return to my wretchedness; it didn't seem to me it would be possible to find another like him. My soul was left as though in a desert, very disconsolate and fearful. I didn't know what to do with myself. A relative of mine arranged to bring me to her house, and I tried to go immediately so as to get another confessor from among those of the Society. The Lord was pleased that I become friendly with a widow of high nobility⁵ who practised prayer and was a very close friend of members of the Society. She made me confess to her own confessor, and I stayed at her house for many days. Her house was nearby, and I was glad to converse a great deal with them; by merely listening to the holiness of their conversation, my soul felt great benefit.

5. This Father began⁶ to lead me to greater perfection. He told me that to please God completely I must leave nothing undone; he did so also with great skill and gentleness because my soul still was not at all strong but very fragile, especially with regard to giving up some friendships I had. Although I was not offending God by them, I was very attached, and it seemed to me it would be ingratitude to abandon them. So I questioned why I should have to be ungrateful since I was not offending God. He told me to commend the matter to God for some days and to recite the hymn *Veni Creator* so that God might give me light about the better course of action. One day, having spent a long time in prayer and begging the Lord to help me please Him in all things, I began the hymn; while saying it, a rapture came upon me so suddenly that it almost carried me out of myself.⁷ It was something I could not doubt, because it was very obvious. It was the first time the Lord granted me this favor of rapture. I heard these words: "No longer do I want you to converse with men but with angels." This experience terrified me because the movement of the soul was powerful and these words were spoken to me deep within the spirit; so it frightened me—although on the other hand I felt great consolation when the fear that, I think, was caused by the novelty of the experience left me.

6. These words have been fulfilled, for I have never again been

able to tie myself to any friendship or to find consolation in or bear particular love for any other persons than those I understand love Him and strive to serve Him; nor is it in my power to do so, nor does it matter whether they are friends or relatives. If I'm not aware that the persons seek to love and serve God or to speak about prayer, it is a painful cross for me to deal with them. To the best of my knowledge this is most certainly true.

7. From that day on I was very courageous in abandoning all for God, as one who had wanted from that moment — for it doesn't seem to me it was otherwise — to change completely. Thus it wasn't necessary that I be given any more commands. Since my confessor saw me so attached in this matter, he hadn't dared to say definitely that I should give up such attachments. He had to wait for the Lord to do the work, as He did. Nor did I think that I could succeed in this matter; I had already tried it, and the distress it caused me was so great since the attachments didn't seem to me to be improper, I abandoned the effort. Now in this rapture the Lord gave me the freedom and strength to perform the task. So I told the confessor and gave up all as he had ordered me. It greatly benefited my confessor to see this determination in me.

8. May God be blessed forever because in an instant He gave me the freedom that I with all the efforts of many years could not attain by myself, often trying so to force myself that my health had to pay dearly. Since it was accomplished by Him who is the powerful and true Lord of all, I felt no pain.

Chapter 25

Discusses the nature of these locutions the Lord grants to the soul without the use of the sense of hearing, some of the delusions that can result from these locutions, and how one can discern when they come from God. This chapter is most helpful and gives much doctrine for those who find themselves in this degree of prayer since the matter is explained very well.

IT SEEMS TO ME it would be good to explain how this locution the Lord grants takes place and what the soul feels, so

that your Reverence may understand it. For from the time I mentioned in which the Lord granted me this favor until now, the favor has been very common, as will be seen in what remains to be said.

The words are very explicit¹ but are not heard with the bodily ears, although they are understood much more clearly than they would be if heard—and to try, no matter how hard, to resist understanding them is of no avail. When, here on earth, we don't want to listen to something, we can stop our ears or so turn our attention to something else that even though we hear we do not understand. In the case of these words God addresses to the soul there is no way of avoiding them; rather, even though I may not want to, they make me listen and make the intellect so keenly capable of understanding what God desires us to understand that it is not enough either to desire or not to desire to understand. He who can do all things wants us to understand that He must do what He wants, and He shows Himself to be our true Lord. I have a lot of experience of this because with the great fear I bore I resisted for almost two years—and sometimes now I try to resist, but to do so is of little avail.

2. I should like to explain the delusions that can take place here, although it seems to me that for anyone who has much experience there will be few or none at all; but there must be much experience. And I also want to explain the difference that lies between what comes from the good spirit and what comes from the bad spirit and how the locution can also be an apprehension of the intellect itself—which can happen—or the spirit itself speaking to itself. (In regard to this latter I don't know if it's possible, but even to this day it has seemed to me to be so.) As for when it is from God I have had much experience in many things that were said to me and were fulfilled after two or three years, and of which up to the present nothing has turned out to be a lie, and in other things where it is seen clearly to be from the spirit of God, as I shall say afterward.

3. It seems to me that one could be recommending something to God with great feeling and intensity and think one understands something about whether it will be done or not, and this is very possible—although anyone who has understood words coming

from God will see clearly the nature of these words coming from the intellect because the difference between the two is great. And if they are something the intellect fabricates, no matter how subtly it works, a person will know that it is the intellect that is composing something and speaking. The difference is that in the one case the words are composed and in the other they are listened to. The intellect will see that it is not then listening because it is working. And the words it fabricates are as though muffled, fancied, and without the clarity of those that come from God. It is in our power to divert our attention from these words of the intellect, as we do when while speaking we decide to keep quiet; in the case of those words that are from God there is no way of diverting one's attention.

Another sign more noticeable than all the others is that these words composed by the intellect do not produce any effect. Those the Lord speaks are both words and works. And even though the words may not be devotional ones but words of reproof, they dispose the soul and prepare it from the very beginning, and they touch it, give it light, favor it and bring it quiet. And if the soul suffers dryness, agitation and worry, these are taken away as though by a stroke of the hand since it seems the Lord wants it to understand that He is powerful and that His words are works.²

4. It seems to me the difference between the two kinds of locution is the same as that between speaking and listening, no more nor less. For when I speak, as I said,³ I compose with the intellect what I am going to say; but if others speak to me, I do no more than listen without any effort. The one kind takes place in such a way that we cannot clearly determine whether the words were really spoken, as when one is half asleep; in those from God the voice is so clear that you don't lose a syllable of what is said. And these latter happen at times when the intellect and the soul are so agitated and distracted that the soul wouldn't succeed in putting together a good sentence—yet it finds that long sentences all prepared are spoken to it, which even though it were deeply recollected it wouldn't be able to compose. And in hearing the first word, as I mentioned, the soul is changed completely. How will things be understood—especially when it is

enraptured, for the faculties are suspended—that didn't even come to its mind before? How will these things come when it hardly functions at all and the imagination remains as though stultified?

5. It should be understood that, in my opinion, visions are never seen nor words understood while the soul is united in the rapture itself. For during this time—as I already explained, I believe, when discussing the second water—⁴ all the faculties are completely lost and, in my opinion, one can neither see nor understand nor hear. The soul is completely under the power of another, and during this time, which is very short, it doesn't seem to me the Lord leaves it any freedom at all. Once this short space of time has passed, while the soul still remains in a kind of rapture, these locutions take place.⁵ The faculties are in such a state that even though they are not lost, they do hardly anything. They are as though absorbed and incapable of putting sentences together. There are so many ways of understanding the difference between the two kinds of locutions that though a soul may be misled once, it will not be misled often.

6. And I say that if the soul is experienced and on the lookout, it will see the difference very clearly. Besides the other things in which the difference I mentioned is seen, the locution coming from the intellect produces no effect, nor does the soul receive any (for with those that come from God it receives the effect whether it wills so or not) or place any trust in the words. Rather the soul understands that the intellect is talking nonsense; it pays no attention to it, almost as it wouldn't pay any attention to a person it knows is in a frenzy.

In the words coming from God the experience is as though we were listening to a very holy person or to one who is most learned with great authority, who we know will not lie to us. And even this comparison is a poor one. For these words at times bear with them such majesty that even though one does not call to mind who it is that speaks them, they make one tremble—if they are words of reproof; and if they are words of love, they make one dissolve in love. They concern matters, as I said,⁶ which are very far from one's mind. Such long sentences are said so quickly that much time would have been necessary to

compose them, and in no way does it seem to me that we can then fail to know that they are something we do not fabricate ourselves. Thus, there's no reason for me to delay on this matter; rarely it seems can an experienced person be deceived if that person does not knowingly want to be deceived.

7. It has often happened to me that if I have some doubt, I do not believe what is spoken to me and think that I imagined the words (this I do afterward, for it is impossible to do so at the time), and after a long while I see them fulfilled. For the Lord causes them to remain in the memory so that they cannot be forgotten. But the locutions that come from the intellect are like the first stirrings of thought which pass and are forgotten. Those that come from God are like a work that—even though something of it is forgotten and time passes—it is not so completely forgotten that the memory of what in substance was said is lost, unless a long time has passed or they are words of favor or doctrine. But in my opinion there is no forgetting the words of prophecy, at least this is so with me even though I have a poor memory.

8. And I repeat that in my opinion, provided a soul is not so impious as to want to make them up—which would be very evil—and assert that it hears them when it doesn't, it would be impossible for it to fail to realize that it composes and speaks them itself and that they haven't come from the Spirit of God. Otherwise its whole life could pass under this delusion, and it would think it understands—although I don't know how. Either this soul desires to understand or it doesn't. If it is getting rid of what it understands and in no way desires to understand anything, on account of a thousand fears and the many other reasons there are for wanting to be quiet and without these things during its prayer, how is it that it gives so much leeway to the intellect to compose sentences? Time is needed for this. In the locutions that come from God, we are taught without losing any time; things are understood that it seems would require a month to compose, and the intellect itself and the soul are amazed at some of the things that are understood.

9. This is the way it is, and anyone who has experience will see that all that I have said is literally so. I praise God because

I have been able to describe it in this way. And I finish by saying that it seems to me that we can understand words coming from the intellect whenever we want, and each time we go to prayer we could think we understand them. But in the words that are from God, this is not so; I will spend many days in which it is impossible to understand something even though I may desire to. And when at other times I don't want to, as I said,⁷ I am made to understand. It seems to me that anyone desiring to mislead others by telling them that something that was heard is from God, when it is from oneself, finds little difficulty in saying that it was heard with the bodily ears. And indeed this is truly so. For I never thought there could be any other way of hearing or understanding until I saw this for myself. And so, as I said,⁸ the experience cost me much difficulty.

10. When the words are from the devil, not only do they fail to have good effects but they leave bad ones. This happened to me no more than two or three times, and I was then advised by the Lord that the words were from the devil. Besides the great dryness that remains, there is a disquiet in the soul like that which the Lord permitted many other times when my soul suffered severe temptations and trials of different kinds. Although this disquiet often torments me as I shall say further on,⁹ one is unable to understand where the disquiet comes from. It seems the soul resists; it is agitated and afflicted without knowing why because what he says is not evil but good. I wonder if one spirit doesn't feel the presence of the other spirit. The consolation and delight that he gives is, in my opinion, very markedly different. He could deceive with these consolations someone who does not have or has not had other consolations from God.

11. I am speaking of true spiritual consolations: a gentle refreshment—strong, deeply impressed, delightful, and quiet. For little devotional feelings of the soul, tears and other little sentiments which, at the first small breeze of persecution, lose their tiny flowers, I do not call devotions, even though they may denote a good beginning and are holy sentiments; but they are not sufficient for the discernment of whether these effects are from a good or bad spirit. So it is well to be ever on one's guard. Persons who have not advanced beyond these devotional feel-

ings can be easily deceived if they have visions or revelations. I never experienced anything of these latter until God had given me, solely out of His goodness, the prayer of union—except in the case of that first time I mentioned¹⁰ when I saw Christ, which happened many years ago. Would that it had pleased His Majesty that I might have understood it to be a true vision as I did afterward, for it would have done me no small amount of good. No mildness remains in the soul when visions or revelations come from the devil; it is left as though frightened and very grieved.

12. I hold it to be most certain that the devil will not deceive—nor will God permit this—a soul that does not trust itself in anything and that is fortified in the faith and understands that it would die a thousand deaths for one item of the faith. And with this love of the faith, which God then infuses and which is a strong living faith, it always strives to proceed in conformity with what the Church holds, asking of this one and that, as one who has already made a firm assent to these truths. All the revelations it could imagine—even if it were to see the heavens open—wouldn't move it one bit from what the Church holds. If at times it should see itself wavering in its thought against this firmness in the faith—I mean that if it doesn't see in itself this great fortitude and if the devotion or vision doesn't provide help toward this fortitude—it shouldn't consider its locution safe. And this applies as well if it should see itself pause to say: "but if God tells me this, it can also be true as was what He told the saints." I don't mean that the soul believes this, but that the devil begins to tempt it through the first urgings—for just to pause over this thought is already very wrong. But in this case I believe that often not even the first urgings will come if the soul is as strong in the faith as the Lord makes the one to whom He grants these things, for it seems to the soul that the devils would harshly criticize even a very small truth that the Church holds.

13. I say that if the soul doesn't see within itself this great fortitude and that if the devotion or vision doesn't help toward this, it shouldn't consider itself safe. Although it may not immediately feel the harm, little by little this harm could become great. For from what I see and know through experience, a locution bears

the credentials of being from God if it is in conformity with Sacred Scripture. And if it should deviate from Scripture just a little, I would have incomparably greater assurance that it comes from the devil than I now have that it comes from God, however, great this latter assurance may be. Then there is no need to go looking for signs or for the spirit the locution comes from. For this sign that it comes from the devil is such a clear one that if the whole world were to assure me that the locution comes from God I would not believe it.

The fact is that when the locution comes from the devil it seems that all blessings go into hiding and flee from the soul, in that it is left displeased and agitated and without any good effect. For even though it may seem that good desires are given, they are not strong ones. The humility such a locution leaves is false, disturbed, and without gentleness. It seems to me that whoever has experience of the good spirit will understand.

14. Still, the devil can play many tricks; so there is nothing more certain in this matter than to have greater fear and always to seek counsel, to have a master who is a learned man, and to hide nothing from him. In this way no harm can come—although a lot of harm was done to me through these excessive fears that some persons have. Especially, it once happened to me that many in whom I had great trust—and there was reason for this—gathered together to discuss at length a remedy for me. Although I discussed the matter with only one of them, I spoke with the others when this person told me to do so. They were very fond of me and feared lest I be deceived. I also had the greatest fear when I was not in prayer—for when I was in prayer and the Lord was granting me some favor, He then assured me. I believe there were five or six of them,¹¹ all great servants of God; and my confessor¹² told me that they all came to the decision that my experience was from the devil, that I shouldn't receive Communion so often, and that I should try to distract myself in such a way that I would not be alone. I was extremely fearful, as I said;¹³ and my heart trouble added to my fear, for I didn't very often dare remain in a room alone during the daytime. Since I saw that so many agreed that my experience was from the devil and that I myself couldn't believe it was, I

felt the greatest scrupulosity, thinking my inability to believe came from my lack of humility. For they all lived a good life — incomparably better than I — and they were learned men. Why shouldn't I believe them? I forced myself insofar as I could to believe what they said, and I thought of my wretched life and that in line with this they must be speaking the truth.

15. I went out of the church with this affliction and entered an oratory. I had for many days given up receiving Communion and given up solitude, which was my whole consolation, since I had no one with whom to speak. They were all against me; some, it seemed, made fun of me when I spoke of the matter, as though I were inventing it; others advised my confessor to be careful of me; others said that my experience was clearly from the devil. My confessor alone (even though he agreed with them in order to test me, as I came to know afterward) always consoled me and told me that even if my experience were of diabolical origin, the devil couldn't do me any harm if I didn't offend God, that the locutions would go away in due time, and that I should very earnestly beg this of God. And he, his penitents, and many others, as well as I in my own prayer, and as many as I knew to be servants of God begged His Majesty to lead me by another path. This continual beseeching of the Lord lasted I guess about two years.

16. No consolation would suffice for me when I reflected that it was possible the devil should speak to me so often. For since I did not set apart hours of solitude for prayer, the Lord made me become recollected during conversation and, without my being able to avoid it, told me what He pleased; even though I may not have wanted to I had to listen.

17. I was alone then without any person in whom I could find some support, unable to pray vocally or read, but terrified by so much tribulation and fear as to whether the devil would deceive me, completely agitated and wearied without knowing what to do with myself. I have seen myself in this affliction some, or many, times; but it doesn't seem to me ever to such an extreme. I remained in this condition for four or five hours, because there was no consolation for me either from heaven or from earth; the Lord left me to suffer and to fear a thousand dangers.

O my Lord, how You are the true friend; and how powerful! When You desire You can love, and You never stop loving those who love You! All things praise You, Lord of the world! Oh, who will cry out for You, to tell everyone how faithful You are to Your friends! All things fail; You, Lord of all, never fail! Little it is, that which You allow the one who loves You to suffer! Oh my Lord! How delicately and smoothly and delightfully You treat them! Would that no one ever pause to love anyone but You! It seems, Lord, You try with rigor the person who loves You so that in extreme trial she might understand the greatest extreme of Your love. Oh my God, who has the understanding, the learning, and the new words with which to extol Your works as my soul understands them? All fails me, my Lord; but if You do not abandon me, I will not fail You. Let all learned men rise up against me, let all created things persecute me, let the devils torment me; do not You fail me, Lord, for I already have experience of the gain that comes from the way You rescue the one who trusts in You alone.

18. While in this great affliction then (although at that time I had not begun to have any vision), these words alone were enough to take it away and bring me complete quiet: "Do not fear, daughter; for I am, and I will not abandon you; do not fear." It seems to me that from the way I felt many hours would have been necessary and no one would have been able to persuade me to be at peace. And behold by these words alone I was given calm together with fortitude, courage, security, quietude, and light so that in one moment I saw my soul become another. It seems to me I would have disputed with the entire world that these words came from God. Oh, what a good God! Oh, how good a Lord and how powerful! He provides not only the counsel but also the remedy! His words are works! Oh, God help me; and how He strengthens faith and increases love!

19. Hence it is, indeed, that I often recalled the time the Lord commanded the winds to be quiet when the storm arose at sea,¹¹ and so I said: Who is this that all my faculties obey Him thus, who gives in a moment and in the midst of such great darkness, who softens a heart that seemed like stone, and who gives the water of gentle tears where it seemed there would be

dryness for a long time? Who imparts these desires? Who bestows this courage? For it occurred to me to think: What do I fear? What is this? I desire to serve this Lord; I aim for nothing else but to please Him. I want no happiness, no rest, no other good but to do His will (for I felt deeply certain in my opinion that I could make this assertion). If this Lord is powerful, as I see that He is and I know that He is, and if the devils are His slaves (and there is no doubt about this because it's a matter of faith), what evil can they do to me since I am a servant of this Lord and King? Why shouldn't I have the fortitude to engage in combat with all of hell?

I took a cross in my hand, and it seemed to me truly that God gave me courage because in a short while I saw that I was another person and that I wouldn't fear bodily combat with them; for I thought that with that cross I would easily conquer all of them. So I said: "Come now all of you, for, being a servant of the Lord, I want to see what you can do to me."

20. There was no doubt, in my opinion, that they were afraid of me, for I remained so calm and so unafraid of them all. All the fears I usually felt left me—even to this day. For although I sometimes saw them, as I shall relate afterward,¹⁵ I no longer had hardly any fear of them; rather it seemed they were afraid of me. I was left with a mastery over them truly given by the Lord of all; I pay no more attention to them than to flies. I think they're such cowards that when they observe they are esteemed but little, their strength leaves them. These enemies don't know how to attack head-on, save those whom they see surrender to them, or when God permits them to do so for the greater good of His servants whom they tempt and torment. May it please His Majesty that we fear Him whom we ought to fear and understand that more harm can come to us from one venial sin than from all hell together—for this is so.

21. How frightened these devils make us because we want to be frightened through other attachments to honors, property, and delights! It is then that they do us great harm, when they are joined with us who loving and desiring what we ought to abhor are in contradiction with ourselves. For we make them fight against us with our own very weapons, handing over to

them what we need for our own defense. This is a great pity. But if we abhor all for God and we embrace the cross and try truly to serve God, the devil will flee these truths like the plague. He is a friend of lies, and is the lie itself. He will make no pact with anyone who walks in truth. When he sees the intellect darkened, he subtly helps to blind the eyes. For if he sees people already blind by the fact that they place their trust in vain things (and so vain that these worldly things become like children's games), he concludes that they are then children, treats them as such, and dares to fight with them not once but many times.

22. May it please the Lord that I not be one of these but that His Majesty favor me so that I may understand by repose what repose is, by honor what honor is, and by delight what delight is—not the reverse; and a fig¹⁶ for all the devils, because they shall fear me. I don't understand these fears, "The devil! The devil!", when we can say "God! God", and make the devil tremble. Yes, for we already know that he cannot stir if the Lord doesn't permit him to. What is this? Without doubt, I fear those who have such great fear of the devil more than I do the devil himself, for he can't do anything to me. Whereas these others, especially if they are confessors, cause severe disturbance; I have undergone some years of such great trial that I am amazed now at how I was able to suffer it. Blessed be the Lord who has so truly helped me!

Chapter 26

Continues on the same subject. Tells and explains about things that happened to her, which both caused her to lose the fear and confirmed that it was the good spirit speaking to her.

I CONSIDER THIS COURAGE the Lord gave me against the devils one of the great favors He granted me. For that a soul should be intimidated by or fearful of anything other than offending God is a serious disadvantage. Since we have an all-powerful King and so great a Lord that He can do all and that He brings all under His subjection, there is nothing to fear, if

one walks, as I said,¹ in truth in the presence of His Majesty and with a pure conscience. Hence, as I said, I would desire all fears so as not to offend for an instant Him who in an instant can annihilate us, because it pleases His Majesty that there be no one against us whom He will not put to flight.

One could say that this statement is true, but ask further who this soul is that is so upright it pleases God completely, and conclude that thus the soul should fear. Certainly it's not my soul, which is very wretched, unprofitable, and filled with a thousand miseries. But God doesn't carry out His work as people do; He understands our weaknesses. Through extensive conjecturing the soul feels within itself that it truly loves Him; in those who reach this state love isn't disguised as in the beginning stages, but it operates with such powerful impulses and desires to see God, as I shall say afterward or have already said,² that everything is tiring, everything wearies, everything torments. If it is not with God or for God, there is no rest that doesn't weary it; so this love is something very clear and, as I say, doesn't pass by in disguise.

2. It happened to me at other times that I was suffering great tribulations and criticism, on account of a certain matter I shall speak of afterward, from almost the entire city where I live and from my order,³ and afflicted by the many occasions there were for becoming disturbed, when the Lord said to me: "Why are you afraid? Do you not know that I am all-powerful? I will fulfill what I have promised." (And it was truly fulfilled later.) I was immediately left with such fortitude that it seemed to me I would again undertake other things, even though they would cost me greater trials, and I would once more take suffering upon myself in order to serve Him. This has happened so many times that I wouldn't be able to count them. Often His words to me were rebukes—and still are when I commit imperfections. These rebukes are enough to dissolve a soul; at least they bear amendment with them, because His Majesty, as I said,⁴ gives both the counsel and the cure. At other times the locutions bring my past sins to mind—especially when the Lord wants to grant me some exceptional favor; it seems the soul is already before the true Judge since they represent the truth to it with such clear

understanding that it doesn't know where to hide. At other times the Lord warns me of some dangers I'm in, or of other persons, and about things of the future—three or four years in advance very often—all of which have been fulfilled. Some of these can be pointed out concretely. Thus there are so many reasons for knowing that the words come from God that in my opinion one cannot be ignorant of this.

3. The safest thing, as the Lord told me, is to make known to my confessor the whole state of my soul and the favors God grants me, that he be learned, and that I obey him. The Lord has often told me this. It is what I do, and without doing so I would have no peace; nor would it be good for women to have a feeling of security since we don't have any learning. Hence there can be no harm but much to gain.

I had a confessor who mortified me very much and was sometimes an affliction and great trial to me because he disturbed me exceedingly, and he was the one who profited me the most as far as I can tell.⁵ And although I had a great love for him, I had some temptations to leave him because it seemed to me the affliction he caused me hindered my prayer. Every time that I was determined to change, I then heard that I should not do so and a rebuke that grieved me more than the confessor did. Sometimes I grew weary: on the one hand I was questioning and on the other hand being rebuked—all was necessary because my will did not easily bend. The Lord told me once that it wasn't obedience if I wasn't resolved to suffer, that I should fix my eyes on what He suffered, and that all would be easy.

4. One time a confessor who heard my confession at the beginning advised me that once the locutions were proven to be from the good spirit I should be silent and not speak about them to anyone, because it would then be better to remain quiet about these things. This didn't seem wrong to me, because each time I told the confessor about the locutions my feeling of shame was so strong that sometimes I felt it more than when I had serious sins to confess. It seemed to me, especially when the favors were great, that the confessors would not believe me and would make fun of me. I felt this so strongly that I thought telling them about these favors would be disrespectful to the wonders of God, and

that for this reason I should remain silent. I then understood that the advice of that confessor was very wrong, that I should in no way remain silent with my confessor, for there would be great security in telling him, and that by not doing this I could sometimes be deceived.

5. As often as the Lord commanded something of me in prayer and my confessor told me to do otherwise, the Lord returned and told me to obey my confessor; afterward His Majesty would change the confessor's mind, and he would agree with the Lord's command. When they forbade the reading of many books in the vernacular,⁶ I felt that prohibition very much because reading some of them was an enjoyment for me, and I could no longer do so since only the Latin editions were allowed. The Lord said to me: "Don't be sad, for I shall give you a living book." I was unable to understand why this was said to me, since I had not yet experienced any visions. Afterward, within only a few days, I understood very clearly, because I received so much to think about and such recollection in the presence of what I saw, and the Lord showed so much love for me by teaching me in many ways, that I had very little or almost no need for books. His Majesty had become the true book in which I saw the truths. Blessed be such a book that leaves what must be read and done so impressed that you cannot forget! Who is it that sees the Lord covered with wounds and afflicted with persecutions who will not embrace them, love them, and desire them? Who beholds something of the glory that He gives to those who serve Him who doesn't know that all one can do and suffer is nothing since we hope for such a reward? Who sees the torments suffered by the damned who doesn't find the torments of earth to be delights in comparison with them and doesn't know how much one owes the Lord for having been freed so often from that place?

6. Because with God's help more will be said about some of these things, I want to get on with the account of my life. May it please the Lord that in what I said I knew how to explain myself. I firmly believe that whoever has had experience will understand and see that I succeeded in saying something; whoever has not had experience—I wouldn't be surprised if it all seems to be nonsense to such a one. It is enough that I have

said this for that person to be excused, nor would I blame anyone who says it is nonsense. May the Lord help me to succeed in doing His will. Amen.

Chapter 27

Treats of another way in which the Lord instructs the soul and, without speaking to it, makes His will known in a wonderful manner. Explains also a non-imaginative vision and great favor the Lord granted her. This chapter is very noteworthy.

WELL, TO RETURN TO THE ACCOUNT of my life. I was enduring this difficult affliction, and, as I have said,¹ many prayers were being offered up that the Lord might lead me by another safer path since this one, they told me, was so suspect. The truth of the matter is that even though I was beseeching God and however much I wanted to desire another path, it wasn't in my power to desire it, even though I always prayed for it, because I saw my soul so improved—except sometimes when I was very worn out from the things they told me and the fears they caused. I saw that I was a completely different person. I could not desire another path, but I placed myself in the hands of God that He would carry out His will completely in me; He knew what suited me. I saw that on this road I was being led to heaven, that previously I had been going to hell, and that I should want to follow this road and not believe that it had the devil as cause. Nor was I able to force myself, even though I did all I could, to believe and desire another road; it wasn't in my power to do so. I offered up what I did, if there was some good deed, for this intention. I invoked my favorite saints that they might free me from the devil. I made novenas. I recommended myself to St. Hilarion and to St. Michael the Archangel, of whom again I became a devotee for this purpose, and I begged many other saints that the Lord might show the truth—I mean that they might obtain this for me from His Majesty.

2. After two years of all these prayers of mine and those of others offered for the said intention (that the Lord would either lead me by another way or make known the truth, for the locutions I mentioned² that the Lord granted me were experienced very repeatedly), the following happened to me. Being in prayer on the feastday of the glorious St. Peter, I saw or, to put it better, I felt Christ beside me; I saw nothing with my bodily eyes or with my soul, but it seemed to me that Christ was at my side—I saw that it was He, in my opinion, who was speaking to me. Since I was completely unaware that there could be a vision like this one, it greatly frightened me in the beginning; I did nothing but weep. However, by speaking one word alone to assure me, the Lord left me feeling as I usually did: quiet, favored, and without any fear. It seemed to me that Jesus Christ was always present at my side; but since this wasn't an imaginative vision,³ I didn't see any form. Yet I felt very clearly that He was always present at my right side and that He was the witness of everything I did. At no time in which I was a little recollected, or not greatly distracted, was I able to ignore that He was present at my side.

3. I immediately went very anxiously to my confessor to tell him. He asked me in what form I saw Him. I answered that I didn't see Him. He asked how I knew that it was Christ. I answered that I didn't know how, but that I couldn't help knowing that He was beside me, that I saw and felt Him clearly, that my recollection of soul was greater, and that I was very continuously in the prayer of quiet, that the effects were much different from those I usually experienced, and that it was very clear.

I could do nothing but draw comparisons in order to explain myself. And, indeed, there is no comparison that fits this kind of vision very well. Since this vision is among the most sublime (as I was afterward told by a very holy and spiritual man, whose name is Friar Peter of Alcántara and of whom I shall speak later,⁴ and by other men of great learning) and the kind in which the devil can interfere the least of all, there are no means by which those of us who know little here below can explain it. Learned men will explain it better. For if I say that I see it with the eyes neither of the body nor of the soul, because it is not an imaginative vision, how do I know and affirm that He is more

certainly at my side than if I saw Him? It is incorrect to think that the vision is like that experience of those who are blind or in the dark who don't see the other at their side. There is some likeness in this comparison but not a great deal, because in such a case these people experience with their senses: either they hear the other person speak or stir, or they touch them. In the vision there is nothing of this, nor do you see darkness; but the vision is represented through knowledge given to the soul that is clearer than sunlight. I don't mean that you see the sun or brightness, but that a light, without your seeing light, illumines the intellect so that the soul may enjoy such a great good. The vision bears with it wonderful blessings.

4. This vision is not like the presence of God that is often felt, especially by those who experience the prayer of union or quiet, in which it seems that in desiring to begin to practice prayer we find Him to speak to, and it seems we know that He hears us through the effects and spiritual feelings of great love and faith that we tenderly experience, and through other resolutions. This presence is a great favor from God and should be highly esteemed by the one He gives it to, for it is a very sublime prayer, but it is not a vision; in this prayer of union or quiet one understands that God is present by the effects that, as I say, He grants to the soul—that is the way His Majesty wants to give the experience of Himself. In this vision it is seen clearly that Jesus Christ, son of the Virgin, is present. In the prayer of union or quiet some impressions of the Divinity are bestowed; in this vision, along with the impressions, you see that also the most sacred humanity accompanies us and desires to grant us favors.

5. Then the confessor asked me, "Who said it was Jesus Christ?" "He told me many times," I answered. But before He told me He impressed upon my intellect that it was He, and before doing this latter He told me He was present—but I didn't see Him. If a person whom I had never seen but only heard of should come to speak to me while I was blind or in the pitch dark and tell me who he was, I would believe it; but I wouldn't be able to assert as strongly that it was that person as I would if I saw him. In the case of this vision, I would; for, without being seen, it is impressed with such clear knowledge that I don't

think it can be doubted. The Lord desires to be so engraved upon the intellect that this vision can no more be doubted than can what is seen; and even less, because when we see we sometimes suspect we may have fancied what we saw. In this vision, even though a suspicion may at first arise, there remains on the other hand such great certitude that the doubt has no force.

6. Hence, there is also another way in which God teaches the soul and speaks to it, different from the manner of speaking described previously.⁵ It is a language that belongs so to heaven that here on earth it is poorly understood, no matter how much we may desire to tell about it, if the Lord does not teach us through experience. The Lord puts what He wants the soul to know very deeply within it, and there He makes this known without image or explicit words, but in the manner of this vision we mentioned.⁶ And this manner in which God gives the soul understanding of His desires and great truths and mysteries is worthy of close attention. Often this is the way I understand when His Majesty explains some vision He wishes to represent to me. It seems to me that for the following reasons⁷ the devil can interfere least in this experience. If these reasons aren't good ones, I must be wrong.

7. This kind of vision and language is something so spiritual that there is no restlessness in the faculties or in the senses, in my opinion, by which the devil can deduce anything. Sometimes— briefly— this suspension takes place; but at other times it seems to me that the faculties are not suspended, nor are the senses withdrawn but very much present. This vision and locution doesn't always come during contemplation; it very seldom does. Yet, when it comes, I say that we neither act nor do anything; all seems to be the work of the Lord. It's as though the food were already placed in the stomach without our eating it or knowing how it got there. It is clearly known to be there, although the stomach doesn't know what food it is or who put it there. But in the case of these locutions, the intellect does know, yet it doesn't know how the locution got there; nothing is seen or understood, nor was the soul ever moved to desire it— nor had I ever been informed that this was possible.

8. In the locution we spoke of previously,⁸ God makes the

intellect become aware—even though it may not wish to do so—and understand what is said; in that experience the soul seemingly has other ears with which it hears, and God makes it listen, and it is not distracted. It's like this: if people have good hearing and don't block their ears and are spoken to in a loud voice, they hear, even though they may not want to; and, in fact, they do something, since they are attentive in order to understand what is spoken to them.

In the locution we are now speaking of, there is none of the above; even this little thing of only listening, which the soul did in the previous locution, is taken away. It finds everything prepared and eaten. There is nothing more to do than to enjoy, as in the example of someone who without having learned or done any work to know how to read, and without having studied anything, would find that all knowledge was possessed inwardly, without knowing how or where it was gotten since no studying had been done, nor even had the abc's been learned.

9. This last comparison seems to me to explain something about this heavenly gift, for the soul sees that in an instant it is wise; the mystery of the Blessed Trinity and other sublime things are so explained that there is no theologian with whom it would not dispute in favor of the truth of these grandeurs. It is left full of amazement; one of these favors is enough to change a soul completely, free it from the love of things, and make it love Him who it sees makes it capable, without any effort of its own, of blessings so great, who communicates secrets to it and treats it with such friendship and love that one cannot describe this in writing. He grants some favors that would be suspect, since they are so admirable and granted to someone who has so little merited them. Those who don't have a very living faith will be unable to believe in them. So I am thinking of speaking but little of the favors the Lord granted me—unless I'm ordered to do otherwise—except for certain visions that can do some good for others; or so that the one to whom the Lord may grant them doesn't become frightened, as I did, in thinking the experience is impossible; or that I might explain the manner and path by which the Lord led me, which is what they commanded me to write about.

10. Returning then to the discussion of this kind of understanding, it seems to me that the Lord in every way wants this soul to have some knowledge of what goes on in heaven. I think that just as in heaven you understand without speaking (which I certainly never knew until the Lord in His goodness desired that I should see and showed Himself to me in a rapture), so it is in this vision. For God and the soul understand each other only through the desire His Majesty has that it understand Him, without the use of any other means devised to manifest the love these two friends have for each other. It's like the experience of two persons here on earth who love each other deeply and understand each other well; even without signs, just by a glance, it seems, they understand each other. This must be similar to what happens in the vision; without our knowing how, these two lovers gaze directly at each other, as the Bridegroom says to the Bride in the *Song of Songs*—⁹ I think I heard that it is there.

11. O admirable kindness of God, You allow me to gaze upon You with eyes that have so badly gazed as have those of my soul. May they, Lord, become accustomed through this vision not to look at base things, so that nothing outside of You might satisfy them! O ingratitude of mortals! To what extremes will you go? For I know through experience that what I say is true and that what can be said is the least of what You do, Lord, for a soul You bring to such frontiers. O souls that have begun to practice prayer and have true faith, what good things can you still seek in this life—leaving aside what is gained for eternity—that could compare with the least of these favors?

12. Reflect that it is indeed certain that God gives Himself in this way to those who give up all for Him. He shows no partiality,¹⁰ He loves everyone. Nobody has any excuse, no matter how miserable they may be, since the Lord so acts with me in bringing me to such a state. Note that what I say is not even a compendium of what could be said. I only say what is necessary to explain this kind of vision and favor the Lord grants the soul. But I can't describe what is felt when the Lord gives it an understanding of His secrets and grandeurs, the delight that so surpasses all those knowable here on earth; indeed, it rightly makes you abhor the delights of this life, which together are all

rubbish. I would find it revolting to have to try to make a comparison between the two delights, even if those of earth were to last forever and those given by the Lord were only a drop of water from the vast overflowing river that is prepared for us.

13. It is a shame, and I certainly am ashamed of myself; if one were able to be embarrassed in heaven, I would be more embarrassed there than anyone! Why must we want so many blessings and delights and so much endless glory all at the cost of the good Jesus? Shall we not at least weep with the daughters of Jerusalem since we do not, with the Cyrenian,¹¹ help Him carry His cross? How can we enjoy along with pleasures and pastimes what He won for us at the cost of so much blood? It's impossible! And do we think that with vain honors we can imitate Him in the contempt He suffered so that we might reign forever? Such a road leads nowhere; it's the wrong, wrong road; we will never arrive by it.

Your Reverence ought to cry out these truths since God has taken from me freedom to do so. I should like them to be proclaimed to me always; yet I've been so slow myself to hear and understand God, as will be seen in what is written here, that it is very embarrassing to speak about this; as a result I desire to be silent. I shall only say what sometimes comes to mind. May it please the Lord to bring me to the goal that I might enjoy this blessing.

14. What accidental glory and what happiness will be the lot of the blessed when they see that, even though late, nothing possible remained for them to do for God and that in conformity with their strength and state they left nothing undone for Him, and in having more, gave more! How rich they will find that they are, they who have left all riches for Christ! How honored will they be, they who have not sought honor from Him but have enjoyed seeing themselves humbled! How wise will they be, they who rejoiced to be considered mad because that is what Wisdom Himself was called! How few madmen there are now—on account of our sins! Truly it seems that now there are no more of those whom people considered mad for doing the heroic deeds of true lovers of Christ. O world, world, how you go on gaining in honor by having few who know you!

15. But do we think that God is now served more if we are considered wise and discreet! That really must be the reason so much discretion is used. We are quick to believe that not much edification is given if each one doesn't proceed, according to one's state, with composure and authority. Even a friar, cleric, or nun would think that to wear something old and patched would be a kind of novelty and would give scandal to the weak; and that even recollection and the practice of prayer would do this. The world has such a mentality and has so forgotten the great perfection and lofty impulses of love the saints experienced that I think this mentality causes more harm and misfortune in these troubled times we live in than the scandals caused by religious when they back up with deeds what they say with words about how little the world should be esteemed; from such scandals the Lord draws forth great blessings. If some are scandalized, others come to their senses. At least there would be offered an image of what Christ and His Apostles suffered since now more than ever such an image is needed.

16. And what a good image of Christ God took from us now in the blessed Friar Peter of Alcántara! The world cannot at this time endure so much perfection. They say that our health is weaker and that these times are not like those of the past. Yet this holy man belonged to the present age. His spirit is large, as in times past; so he trampled the world under foot. Although others may not be detached or perform such harsh penance as he, there are many ways, as I've said at other times,¹² of trampling on the world; the Lord teaches them when He sees the courage. And what marvelous courage His Majesty gave this great saint of whom I'm speaking in order that he perform such rough penance, as everyone knows, for forty-seven years! I want to say something about this penance, for I know the facts are all true.

17. He told me of it, and also another person¹³ from whom he hid nothing. (The reason he told me was his love for me, for the Lord desired this so that he would return and encourage me at a time of great need, as I said and will say.)¹⁴ I think he told me that for forty years he slept only an hour and a half during the night and that in the beginning this was his greatest

penitential trial, to conquer sleep, and that to do this he was always either on his knees or standing. When he did sleep, he did so sitting up, with his head resting on a little log nailed to the wall. He could not have stretched out even if he wanted to, because his cell—as is known—was no larger than four and a half feet. However hot or rainy the weather was in all those years, he never put up his cowl; he wore nothing on his feet, nor did he wear any clothes other than a coarse serge habit with nothing else to cover the body—that was as tight as could be, and a short mantle over it made of the same material. He told me that when it was terribly cold he took the mantle off and left the door and little window of his cell opened so that afterward by putting the mantle on again and closing the door he was able to appease the body by the warmth that came from more covering. Eating every third day was a very common practice for him, and he told me when I showed surprise that it was easily possible for anyone who got used to doing so. One of his companions told me that once Friar Peter went eight days without eating. It must have happened while he was in prayer, for he experienced great raptures and impulses of love of God, of which I was once a witness.

18. His practice of poverty and mortification during his youth was extreme. He told me that he had lived in a house of his order for three years and, because he had never raised his eyes, had not known any of the friars save by their voice, and that he hadn't known how to get to the places where he had to go, but followed the other friars. This he did on his journeys. He never looked at women for many years. He told me that it no longer made any difference whether he saw or did not see. But he was very old when I came to know him,¹⁵ and so extremely weak that it seemed he was made of nothing but tree roots.

Yet with all this sanctity he was very affable, although his words were few unless he was questioned. He was very pleasant in his speech because he had a bright mind. There are many other things I should like to say, but I am afraid your Reverence will ask why I'm getting into all this—and I've written it with this fear. Hence, I will conclude by saying that his ending was like his life, preaching to his friars and admonishing them. When

he saw that he was dying, he recited the psalm, *Laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt mihi*,¹⁶ and casting himself on his knees, he died.

19. Afterward the Lord was pleased that I receive more help from him—through the counsel he gave me about many matters—than I did during his life. I have often seen him in the greatest glory. He told me the first time he appeared to me that the penance that merited such a reward was a blessed penance, and many other things. One year before he died, though being some leagues away from here, he appeared to me; since I knew he was going to die, I told him so. When he died, he appeared to me and told me that he was going to his rest. I didn't believe it, but did tell some persons; after eight days the news came that he was dead, or, better, that he had begun to live forever.

20. Behold how this harsh life ended with such great glory. I think he consoles me much more than when he was here on earth. The Lord once told me that nothing would be sought in Friar Peter's name that He would not bestow. Many of the things I've recommended to his prayers I've seen fulfilled. May the Lord be blessed forever, amen.

21. But what a discourse I've got into! May it awaken your Reverence so that you will not esteem anything pertaining to this life—as though you didn't know and weren't already determined to abandon all, and hadn't already put this renunciation into practice!

I see so much perdition in the world that even though my writing about it brings me no more benefit than to tire me out, I find rest in doing so; for everything I have written is against myself. May the Lord pardon me for my offenses against Him in this matter, and may your Reverence do so too, for I tire you unintentionally. It appears that I want you to do penance for my sins in this matter.

Chapter 28

Deals with the great favors the Lord granted her and how He appeared to her the first time. Explains what an imaginative vision is. Tells about the remarkable effects and signs this vision leaves behind when it is from God. This is a very instructive chapter and well worth noting.

TO RETURN TO OUR TOPIC,¹ I passed some days—a few—in which I experienced this vision continually; it did me so much good that I never left prayer. No matter how much I did, I strove that it be done in such a way that it would not displease the One who I clearly saw was witnessing it. And although sometimes I was afraid on account of all the warnings they were giving, this fear didn't last long, because the Lord was giving me assurance.

One day, while I was in prayer, the Lord desired to show me only His hands which were so very beautiful that I would be unable to exaggerate the beauty. This vision caused me great fear; any supernatural favor the Lord grants me frightens me at first, when it is new. After a few days I saw also that divine face which it seems left me completely absorbed. Since afterward He granted me the favor of seeing Him entirely, I couldn't understand why the Lord showed Himself to me in this way, little by little, until later I understood that His Majesty was leading me in accordance with my natural weakness. May He be blessed forever! So much glory would have been unbearable next to so lowly and wretched a subject as I; and as one who knew this, the merciful Lord was preparing me.

2. It will seem to your Reverence that strength like this wasn't necessary to see some hands and so beautiful a face. Glorified bodies have such beauty that the sight of so supernatural a beauty deriving from glory causes confusion. Thus the vision caused me a fear so great that I was completely agitated and disturbed, although afterward I remained so certain and secure and felt such other effects that I immediately lost the fear.

3. One feastday of St. Paul, while I was at Mass, this most sacred humanity in its risen form was represented to me completely, as it is in paintings, with such wonderful beauty and

majesty; I have written about it in particular to your Reverence when you insistently ordered me to do so. And writing about it was very difficult for me to do because one cannot describe this vision without ruining it. But as best I could I have already told you about it,² and so there is no reason to speak of it here again. I only say that if there were nothing else to provide delight for one's vision in heaven than the exalted beauty of glorified bodies, this vision would be very great glory, especially the vision of the humanity of Jesus Christ, our Lord. And if even here on earth His Majesty shows Himself according to what our wretchedness can bear, what will be the glory when such a blessing is enjoyed completely?

4. I never saw this vision—nor any other—with my bodily eyes, even though it is an imaginative one.

Those who know more about these matters than I say that the intellectual vision is more perfect than this one and that this one is much more perfect than visions seen with the bodily eyes. These latter, corporeal visions, they say, are the lowest and the kind in which the devil can cause more illusions; although at that time I couldn't understand this. But since an imaginative vision was being granted to me, I desired that I might see it with my bodily eyes so that my confessor wouldn't tell me that I had imagined it. And after the vision passed away, it also happened to me—and this was at once—that I thought that I had imagined it; thinking I had deceived my confessor, I was bothered about having told it to him. This was another cause for tears, and I went and explained to him. He asked me whether it just seemed to me that I had deceived him or whether I had desired to deceive him. I told him the truth, for, in my opinion, I had not lied, nor had I intended to; nor for anything in the world would I say one thing for another. He well knew this, and so he tried to calm me. I felt so sorry for having gone to him with these things, for I don't know how the devil got me to torment myself with the thought that I had made up the vision.

But so quickly did the Lord grant me this favor and declare this truth that very soon the doubt about my imagining it left me, and afterward I saw clearly my foolishness. If I should have spent many years trying to imagine how to depict something

so beautiful, I couldn't have, nor would I have known how to; it surpasses everything imaginable here on earth, even in just its whiteness and splendor.

5. The splendor is not one that dazzles; it has a soft whiteness, is infused, gives the most intense delight to the sight, and doesn't tire it; neither does the brilliance, in which is seen the vision of so divine a beauty, tire it. It is a light so different from earthly light that the sun's brightness that we see appears very tarnished in comparison with that brightness and light represented to the sight, and so different that afterward you wouldn't want to open your eyes. It's like the difference between a sparkling, clear water that flows over crystal and on which the sun is reflecting and a very cloudy, muddy water flowing along the ground. This doesn't mean that the sun is represented or that the light resembles sunlight. It seems in fact like natural light, and the sunlight seems artificial. It is a light that has no night; nothing troubles it. In sum, it is of such a kind that a person couldn't imagine what it is like in all of life's days no matter how powerful the intellect. God gives it so suddenly that there wouldn't even be time to open your eyes, if it were necessary to open them. For when the Lord desires to give the vision, it makes no more difference if they are opened than if they are closed; even if we do not desire to see the vision, it is seen. No distraction is enough to resist it, nor is there power or diligence or care enough to do so. I have clearly experienced this, as I shall say.³

6. What I should now like to speak of is the way in which the Lord reveals Himself by means of these visions. I don't mean that I shall explain how such a strong light can be put in the interior faculty and so clear an image put in the intellect—for it seems truly that that's where it is—because this is something for men of learning to explain. The Lord has not given me understanding of how this is done, and I am so ignorant and my intellect so dull that to no matter what extent these men of learning have desired to explain to me how this vision comes about, I have still not been able to understand. It is certain that even though it seems to your Reverence that I have a lively intellect, I do not. In many things I've experienced that I don't know any more than what is given me to eat, as the saying goes.

Sometimes my confessors have been amazed at my ignorance. And I have never understood, nor have I desired to understand, how God causes this vision or how it could come about, nor did I ask, even though, as I have said,⁴ for many years now I've had contact with competent men of learning. Whether something was a sin or not—yes, this I did discuss with them. As for the rest, it wasn't necessary for me to think anything but that God did it all. I saw there was no reason for me to be startled but to praise Him. Indeed the difficult things He does cause more devotion in me; and the more difficult, the more devotion they cause.

7. I shall then say what I have come to see through experience. How the Lord does it, your Reverence will speak of better than I, and will explain what remains obscure and what I may not have known how to say. It seemed clear to me in some cases that what I saw was an image, but in many other instances, no; rather, it was Christ Himself by reason of the clarity with which He was pleased to reveal Himself to me. Sometimes the vision was so obscure that it seemed to me an image, not like an earthly drawing no matter how perfect it may be—for I have seen many good ones. It is foolish to think that an earthly drawing can look anything like a vision; it does so no more nor less than living persons resemble their portraits. No matter how good the portrait may have turned out, it can't look so natural that in the end it isn't recognized as a dead thing. But let us leave this example aside; it applies well here and is very exact.

8. I don't say this example is a comparison—for comparisons are never so exact—but the truth. The difference lies in that which there is between living persons and paintings of them—no more nor less. For if what is seen is an image, it is a living image—not a dead man, but the living Christ. And He makes it known that He is both man and God, not as He was in the tomb but as He was when He came out of the tomb after His resurrection. Sometimes He comes with such great majesty that no one could doubt but that it is the Lord Himself. Especially after receiving Communion—for we know that He is present, since our faith tells us this—He reveals Himself as so much the lord of this dwelling that it seems the soul is completely dissolved;

and it sees itself consumed in Christ. O my Jesus! Who could make known the majesty with which You reveal Yourself! And, Lord of all the world and of the heavens, of a thousand other worlds and of numberless worlds, and of the heavens that You might create, how the soul understands by the majesty with which You reveal Yourself that it is nothing for You to be Lord of the world!

9. In this vision the powerlessness of all the devils in comparison with Your power is clearly seen, my Jesus; and it is seen how whoever is pleasing to You can trample all hell under foot. In this vision the reason is seen why the devils feared when You descended into limbo and why they would have preferred to be in another thousand lower hells in order to flee from such great majesty. I see that You want the soul to know how tremendous this majesty is and the power that this most sacred humanity joined with the Divinity has. In this vision there is a clear representation of what it will be like on Judgment Day to see the majesty of this King and to see its severity toward those who are evil. This vision is the source of the true humility left in the soul when it sees its misery, which it cannot ignore. This vision is the source of confusion and true repentance for sins; although the soul sees that He shows love, it doesn't know where to hide, and so it is completely consumed.

I say that this vision has such tremendous power when the Lord desires to show the soul a great part of His grandeur and majesty that it would be impossible for any subject to endure it—unless the Lord should want to help it very supernaturally by placing it in rapture and ecstasy since in the enjoyment of that divine presence the vision of it is lost.

Is it true that it is forgotten afterward? That majesty and beauty remain so impressed that they are unforgettable, except when the Lord wishes the soul to suffer a great dryness and solitude of which I shall speak further on;⁵ for then it seems it even forgets God. The soul undergoes a change; it is always absorbed; it seems that a new, living, high degree of love is beginning. For although the intellectual vision, of which I spoke,⁶ that represents God in an imageless way is more perfect, a wonderful thing happens when so divine a presence is represented in

the imagination so that in conformity with our weakness this presence can last in the memory and keep the thought well occupied. These two kinds of vision almost always come together. This is the way they occur: with the eyes of the soul we see the excellence, beauty, and glory of the most holy humanity; and through the intellectual vision, which was mentioned, we are given an understanding of how God is powerful, that He can do all things, that He commands all and governs all, and that His love permeates all things.

10. This vision is very worthy of esteem and, in my opinion, there is no danger in it, because by its effects it is known that the devil has no power here. It seems to me he has wanted to represent the Lord Himself in this way three or four times by a false representation. He takes the form of flesh, but he can't counterfeit the image by giving it the glory that it has when it comes from God. He makes representations so as to destroy the true vision the soul has seen; but the soul of itself resists and is agitated, displeased, and disturbed since it loses the devotion and delight it had before and remains without any prayer. In the beginning this happened, as I said,⁷ three or four times. It is something so very different that even if one has experienced only the prayer of quiet, I believe that one will understand by the effects which were mentioned in speaking of locutions.⁸ This false representation is something very obvious; if the soul does not want to be deceived, and it walks in humility and simplicity, I don't think it will be deceived. Anyone who has had a true vision from God can tell the false almost immediately, for, although this false vision begins with pleasure and delight, the soul hurls it from itself; and even the delight, I think, must be different—it doesn't have the appearance of pure and chaste love. The devil very quickly shows who he is. So where there is experience, the devil, in my opinion, can do no harm.

11. That this vision from God could be the work of the imagination is the most impossible of impossible things; it is utter nonsense to think so, for the beauty and the whiteness of one hand alone is completely beyond our imagination. It's impossible to see in a moment, without thinking or ever having thought about them, things represented that in a long time could not

have been put together by the imagination, because they go far beyond, as I said,⁹ what we can comprehend here on earth. And if we could imagine something of the vision, the difference could still be seen clearly by this other factor that I shall now mention. For if the vision were represented by means of the intellect, apart from the fact that it wouldn't produce any of the great effects that a true one produces, the soul would be left exhausted. Doing this would be like wanting to make oneself go to sleep and yet remaining awake because the sleep doesn't come. When people need sleep or feel a weakness in the head and desire sleep, they do what they can and at times it seems they are achieving something. But if it isn't true sleep that comes to them, they will not be sustained nor will they experience in their head a renewed feeling of strength; rather, they will feel more exhausted. Something similar would happen here; for if the intellect were to produce the vision, the soul would be left exhausted—not sustained and strong, but tired and displeased. One cannot exaggerate the richness that the true vision leaves; it even gives health to the body and leaves it comforted.

12. I gave this reason along with others when they told me that the devil was the cause or that I had fancied the vision—and this was often—and I made comparisons as I could, and the Lord gave me understanding. But all of this proved to be of little avail. Since there were very holy persons in this place—and compared to them I was a wretched person—and God was not leading them by this path, they immediately became fearful. For it seems that because of my sins, my secrets and confidences, which they came to know of, were spread around, although I spoke to no one about them except to my confessor or anyone he told me to tell.

13. I told them once that if they were to tell me that a person whom I knew very well and with whom I had just finished speaking were not that person, but that I had imagined it, I would without doubt, as they knew, believe what they said rather than what I had seen. But if this person were to leave me some jewels, and they were left in my hands as tokens of great love, I would not believe what they said, even though I desired, because I hadn't had any jewels before and was poor, whereas now I found

that I was rich. I was able to show them these jewels because all who knew me saw clearly that my soul was changed, and my confessor told me so. The difference in all things was very great; it was not feigned, but all could see it very clearly. I said that since I was previously so wretched I couldn't believe that if the devil did this to deceive me and bring me to hell he would have taken a means as contrary as was that of removing vices and bestowing virtues and fortitude. For I saw clearly that by these experiences I was at once changed.

14. Insofar as I know, my confessor, as I say — who was a truly holy Father from the Society of Jesus — ¹⁰ gave this same reply. He was very discreet and deeply humble; and this humility that was so great brought upon me many trials. For since he was a learned and very prayerful man, and the Lord didn't lead him by this path, he didn't trust in himself. He suffered many great trials in many ways on my account. I knew that they told him to be careful of me, that he shouldn't let the devil deceive him by anything I told him; they brought up examples to him of other persons. All of this made me anxious. I feared that I would have no one who would hear my confession, but that all would run from me. I did nothing but weep.

15. By God's providence he wanted to continue to hear my confession, for he was such a great servant of God that he would have put up with anything for God; so he advised me that I shouldn't turn aside from what he told me or fear that he would fail me, and that I shouldn't offend God. He always encouraged and comforted me. He always ordered me not to hold anything from him. I never did. He told me that if I followed this advice the devil wouldn't be able to harm me even if the vision did come from him, but that rather the Lord would draw good out of the evil the devil desired to do my soul. This Father strove for my soul's perfection in every way he could. Since I had so much fear, I obeyed him in everything, although imperfectly; for on account of these trials he suffered a great deal during the three years or more that he was my confessor.¹¹ In the great persecutions I suffered and in the many bad judgments the Lord allowed others to make of me — and often without their being at fault — everyone came to him, and he was blamed without any

fault on his part.

16. It would have been impossible for him to suffer so much if he hadn't been so holy and the Lord hadn't encouraged him. He had to respond to those who thought I was going astray; and they didn't believe him. On the other hand he had to calm me and heal the fear I had by putting greater stress on the fear of offending God. He also had to assure me; for since in each vision there was something new, God permitted that I afterward be left with great fears. Everything happened to me because I was and had been such a sinner. This Father comforted me with great pity. If he would have trusted in himself more, I wouldn't have suffered so much; God gave him understanding of the truth in all things—the very Sacrament itself enlightened him, I believe.

17. Those servants of God who were not so sure about me conversed with me often.¹² Since I spoke carelessly about some things, they interpreted my intention differently and thought that what I said, without my being careful, as I say, showed little humility. (I loved one of them very much because my soul owed him an infinite debt and he was very holy; I felt it infinitely when I saw that he didn't understand me; he strongly desired that I might advance and that the Lord might give me light.) Upon seeing some little fault in me—for they saw many—everything else was immediately condemned. They asked me some things; I answered plainly and carelessly. At once they supposed that I wanted to teach them and that I thought I was wise. It would all get back to my confessor, for certainly they desired my good; and he would again scold me.

18. This lasted for a long time, in which I was afflicted on all sides, although I was able to bear those trials by means of the favors the Lord was granting me. I say this so that it might be known what a great trial it is not to have someone who has experience of this spiritual path; if the Lord hadn't favored me so much, I don't know what would have happened to me. There were enough things to drive me insane, and sometimes I found myself in such straits that I didn't know what to do other than raise my eyes to the Lord. For the opposition of good men to a little woman, wretched, weak, and fearful like myself, seems to be nothing when described in so few words; yet among the

very severe trials I suffered in my life, this was one of the most severe. Please the Lord that I may have served His Majesty somewhat through this trial. For I am very certain that those who accused and condemned me were serving Him, and that it was all for my greater good.

Chapter 29

Continues the topic begun and tells of some great favors the Lord granted her and of some things His Majesty told her for her own assurance and so that she could answer those who contradicted her.

I'VE WANDERED FAR from my topic because I was about to speak of the signs for discerning that the vision is not produced by the imagination.¹ How could we represent in detail the humanity of Christ and imagine His great beauty? No little time would be required if the image were to look somewhat like Him. You could indeed represent Him in your imagination and gaze upon Him for some time, and upon His form and whiteness, and gradually perfect that image and commit it to memory. Who could take away such an image, since the intellect was able to fashion it? In the vision we are dealing with there is no possibility of fashioning it ourselves, but we must look at what the Lord desires to show us, when He desires, and as He desires. There is no taking it away or inducing it, nor, however much we try, is there any way of doing either; nor when we desire is there a way to see it or to stop seeing it. If we want to look at some particular thing, the vision of Christ ceases.

2. For two and a half years God frequently granted me this favor. It must be for over three years now that He has continually replaced this favor with another more sublime—as I shall perhaps afterward explain.² And in being aware that He was speaking to me and that I was beholding that great beauty and the gentleness with which He spoke those words with His most beautiful and divine mouth—and at other times beholding His severity—and strongly desiring to know the color of His eyes, or how tall He was, so that I could be able to describe these

things, I never merited to see them. Nor was I able to obtain this knowledge; rather, by trying to do so, I would lose the vision entirely. Indeed I sometimes see Him looking at me with pity, but this kind of vision is so powerful that the soul cannot suffer it, and it remains in such a sublime rapture that in order to enjoy the beautiful vision more completely it loses it. Hence with respect to this vision there is nothing to desire or not to desire. It is clearly seen that the Lord desires nothing else than humility and confusion, and that we accept what is given and praise the one who gives it.

3. This is the case in all visions without exception; our effort can neither do nor undo anything when it comes to seeing more or seeing less. So that we may be made less capable of pride, the Lord desires us to be very clearly aware that this is not our work but His Majesty's work. Rather, it makes us humble and fearful when we observe that since the Lord takes away our power of seeing what we desire to see, He can take from us these favors and gifts—and we shall be left with nothing. We should always walk in fear as long as we live in this exile.

4. The Lord almost always showed Himself to me as risen, also when He appeared in the Host—except at times when He showed me His wounds in order to encourage me when I was suffering tribulation. Sometimes He appeared on the cross or in the garden, and a few times with the crown of thorns; sometimes He also appeared carrying the cross on account, as I say, of my needs and those of others. But His body was always glorified.

I suffered numerous affronts and trials in speaking about these visions, and very many persecutions. It seemed so certain to them that I had a devil that some persons wanted to exorcise me. This didn't matter much to me; but I grieved when I saw that my confessors were afraid to hear my confession or when I learned that others said something to them. Nonetheless, I was never able to regret having seen these heavenly visions, and I would not exchange even one for all the goods and delights of the world. I have always considered a vision a great favor from the Lord. It seems to me to be a most rich treasure, and the Lord Himself assured me of this many times. I saw that I was increasing very

much in His love. I went to Him to complain about all these trials, and I always came away from prayer consoled and with new strength. I didn't dare contradict those who were judging my spirit, because I saw that everything would then become worse since my doing so would appear to them as a lack of humility. I talked with my confessor; he always consoled me greatly when he saw that I was troubled.

5. Since the visions were increasing, one from the group who previously helped me — ³ for he sometimes heard my confession when the ordinary confessor wasn't able to do so — began to say that it was clearly the devil. He ordered that, since I didn't have the means to resist the visions, I should always bless myself when I saw one and make the gesture of scorn called the fig; he was certain the devil was the cause and that by my doing this the vision wouldn't return. He told me that I shouldn't be afraid, that God would protect me and take it away from me. Following this advice was very painful to me. Since I couldn't believe but that the vision was from God, it was a terrible thing for me to have to do what I was commanded; and neither could I desire, as I said, ⁴ that the vision be taken away. But, finally, I did all they ordered me to do. I begged God persistently and with many tears that He would free me from deception. And I begged St. Peter and St. Paul; for since the first time the Lord appeared to me was on their feastday, ⁵ He told me that they would protect me from being deceived. Thus I often saw them very clearly at my left, although not by an imaginative vision. These glorious saints were very much lords of mine.

6. Making the fig at this vision of the Lord caused me the greatest pain. When I saw Him present, I couldn't have believed it was the devil if they broke me in pieces; thus it was a kind of severe penance for me. So that I would not be forever blessing myself, I held a cross in my hand. I did this almost all the time; I didn't make the fig so continually, because it grieved me deeply to do so. I recalled the injuries the Jews caused Him and begged Him to pardon me since I was doing it in order to obey the one who stood in His place, and not to blame me, since they were the ministers that He had placed in His Church. He told me not to worry and that I did well in obeying, but that He would

make the truth known. When they forbade me to practice prayer, it seemed to me He was annoyed. He told me to tell them that now what they were doing was tyranny. He gave me signs for knowing that the vision was not from the devil. I shall mention some afterward.⁶

7. Once while I was holding the cross in my hand, for I had it on a rosary, He took it from me with His own hands; when He gave it back to me, it was made of four large stones incomparably more precious than diamonds—there is no appropriate comparison for supernatural things. A diamond seems to be something counterfeit and imperfect when compared with the precious stones that are seen there. The representation of the five wounds was of very delicate workmanship. He told me that from then on I would see the cross in that way; and so it happened, for I didn't see the wood from which it was made but these stones. No one, however, saw this except me.

When I began to try to obey the command to reject and resist these favors, there was a much greater increase in them. In seeking to distract myself, I never got free from prayer. It even seemed to me that I was in prayer while sleeping. There was an increase of love and of the loving complaints I was addressing to the Lord; the pain became unbearable, nor was it in my power to stop thinking of Him no matter how much I tried and even though I wanted to. Nonetheless, I obeyed when I could; but in this matter I was able to do little or nothing at all, and the Lord never took prayer from me. But even though He told me to do what they said, He assured me on the other hand and taught me what I should say to them—and so He does now. He gave me so many adequate reasons that these reasons made me feel completely secure.

8. After a short time His Majesty began as He had promised me⁷ to give further indication that it was He by increasing the love of God in me to such a degree that I didn't know where it came from (for it was very supernatural); nor did I procure it. I saw that I was dying with desire to see God, and I didn't know where to seek this life except in death. Some great impulses of this love came upon me in such a way that, even though they were not as unbearable as those I already mentioned before⁸ or

of such value, I didn't know what to do with myself. For nothing satisfied me, nor could I put up with myself; it truly seemed as if my soul were being wrested from me. O superb contrivance of my Lord! What delicate skill You use with Your miserable slave! You hide Yourself from me and afflict me with Your love through a death so delightful that the soul would never want to escape from it.

9. It's impossible for anyone who has not experienced them to be able to understand these impulses, which are so vehement. For they are not a disquiet of the heart. Neither are they the certain devotional feelings that often occur and seem to suffocate the spirit because they can't be contained. These devotional feelings belong to a lower form of prayer and their impetuous stirrings should be avoided by trying gently to gather them within oneself and by quieting the soul. This condition is like that of children crying so furiously that it seems they are about to be suffocated; their excessive feelings cease when they are given something to drink. So it is here. Reason should bridle these feelings because they could be caused by our own natural weakness. We should consider with fear that they are not totally perfect but can pertain in great part to the sensory portion of the soul. And let this child become quiet by a loving caress which moves it to love, by gentle means and not by blows, as they say. Let this love be held within and not resemble the pot that heats up too fast and boils over because too much wood was put on the fire. They should moderate the causes of the increase of this fire and strive to put it out with gentle and not arduous tears; for such are the tears that come from these feelings, and these tears do much harm. I myself sometimes experienced them in the beginning, and they left my head so exhausted and my spirit so tired that for another day or more I was unfit to return to prayer. Hence great discretion is necessary in the beginning so that everything may proceed gently and the spirit may be shown how to work interiorly. One should strive earnestly to avoid exterior feelings.

10. These other impulses are far different. We ourselves don't put the wood on the fire, but it seems that once the fire is going we are suddenly thrown into it so as to be burned up. The soul

doesn't strive for the pain of this wound caused by the Lord's absence, but at times an arrow is thrust into the deepest and most living recesses of the heart in such a way that the soul doesn't know what has happened or what it wants. It well understands that it wants God and that the arrow seems to have been dipped in a poisonous herb so that for the love of this Lord it might despise itself; and it would gladly lose its life for Him. You can't exaggerate or describe the way in which God wounds the soul and the extreme pain this wound produces, for it causes the soul to forget itself. Yet this pain is so delightful that there is no other pleasure in life that gives greater happiness. The soul would always want, as I said,⁹ to be dying of this sickness.

11. This pain and glory joined together left me confused; I couldn't understand how such a combination was possible. Oh, what it is to see a wounded soul! I say that this reality should be understood in such a way that the soul is said to be wounded for a very sublime reason and there be clear awareness that the soul did not cause this love, but that seemingly a spark from the very great love the Lord has for it suddenly fell upon it, making it burn all over. Oh, how many times when I am in this state do I recall that verse of David: *Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum*;¹⁰ for it seems to me that I experience it literally within myself.

12. When this thirst is not too severe, it seems it can be appeased somewhat; at least the soul seeks some remedy—for it doesn't know what to do—through certain penances, but they are no more felt and cause no more pain than would the shedding of blood from a dead body. It seeks ways and means of doing something about the love of God it feels. But this pain of love is so great that I don't know what bodily torment would take it away. Since the remedy doesn't lie in bodily penances, these penances make very poor medicine for so sublime a sickness. They can relieve it somewhat, and the soul can get along in this way while at the same time begging God to provide a cure for its sickness. But it sees no remedy other than death, for it thinks that by means of death it can enjoy its Good completely. At other times the pain becomes so severe that the soul can do neither penance nor anything else, for the whole body

is paralyzed. One is unable to stir with either the feet or the arms. Rather, if one is standing, one sits down, like a person being carried from one place to another, unable even to breathe. The soul lets out some sighs—not great ones—because it can do no more; they are felt within.

13. The Lord wanted me while in this state to see sometimes the following vision: I saw close to me toward my left side an angel in bodily form. I don't usually see angels in bodily form except on rare occasions; although many times angels appear to me, but without my seeing them, as in the intellectual vision I spoke about before.¹¹ This time, though, the Lord desired that I see the vision in the following way: the angel was not large but small; he was very beautiful, and his face was so aflame that he seemed to be one of those very sublime angels that appear to be all afire. They must belong to those they call the cherubim, for they didn't tell me their names. But I see clearly that in heaven there is so much difference between some angels and others and between these latter and still others that I wouldn't know how to explain it. I saw in his hands a large golden dart and at the end of the iron tip there appeared to be a little fire. It seemed to me this angel plunged the dart several times into my heart and that it reached deep within me. When he drew it out, I thought he was carrying off with him the deepest part of me; and he left me all on fire with great love of God. The pain was so great that it made me moan, and the sweetness this greatest pain caused me was so superabundant that there is no desire capable of taking it away; nor is the soul content with less than God. The pain is not bodily but spiritual, although the body doesn't fail to share in some of it, and even a great deal. The loving exchange that takes place between the soul and God is so sweet that I beg Him in His goodness to give a taste of this love to anyone who thinks I am lying.

14. On the days this lasted I went about as though stupefied. I desired neither to see nor to speak, but to clasp my suffering close to me, for to me it was greater glory than all creation.

Sometimes it happened—when the Lord desired—that these raptures were so great that even though I was among people I couldn't resist them; to my deep affliction they began to be

made public. After I experience them I don't feel this suffering so strongly; rather I experience what I mentioned before in that other part—I don't recall which chapter—¹² which is very different in many respects and more valuable. But when this pain I'm now speaking of begins, it seems the Lord carries the soul away and places it in ecstasy; thus there is no room for pain or suffering, because joy soon enters in.

May He be blessed forever who grants so many favors to one who responds so poorly to gifts as great as these.

Chapter 30

Returns to the account of her life and tells how the Lord removed many of her trials by bringing to the city in which she lived the saintly Friar Peter of Alcántara, of the order of the glorious St. Francis. Discusses the great temptations and interior trials she sometimes underwent.

AWARE THEN OF THE LITTLE, or nothing at all, I could do to avoid these impulses, which were so great, I also feared having them; I didn't understand how suffering and happiness could go together. Bodily suffering and spiritual happiness I already knew were truly possible; but such excessive spiritual pain with such very great joy—this bewildered me.

I still didn't stop trying to resist, but I could do so little that sometimes it tired me. I protected myself with the cross and wanted to defend myself with the means by which the Lord protected all of us. I saw that no one understood me; I knew this very clearly. But I didn't dare mention it except to my confessor, for to have done so would have amounted to saying truly and clearly that I wasn't humble.

2. The Lord was pleased to remove a great part of my trial—and then all of it—by bringing to this city the blessed Friar Peter of Alcántara, whom I already mentioned; and I said something about his penance.¹ Among other things, it was verified for me that for twenty years he continually wore a hairshirt made of tin plate. He is the author of some small books in the vernacular on prayer that are now popular, for as one who practiced it well

himself he wrote in a very helpful way for those who are given to prayer.² He observed the first rule of the blessed St. Francis in all its rigor besides the other things mentioned to some extent above.

3. Well, that widow, the servant of God and friend of mine whom I mentioned,³ knew that so great a man was here; and she knew also of my need. She was a witness to my afflictions, and she comforted me greatly because her faith was so strong that she couldn't but believe that what all the others attributed to the devil was from the Spirit of God. Since she is a very intelligent and trustworthy person to whom the Lord has granted much favor in prayer, His Majesty desired to enlighten her in matters about which the learned men were ignorant. My confessors gave me permission to confide some things to her, for there were many reasons for trusting her. Sometimes the Lord shared with her the favors He granted me together with counsel very profitable for her soul.

Once she knew that this saintly man was in the city, without saying anything to me, she obtained permission from my provincial that I stay at her house for eight days so that I might be able to talk with him more easily. Both in her home and in some of the churches I spoke with him frequently during this first time he was here; afterward at various times I conversed with him a great deal. I gave him a summary account of my life and manner of proceeding in prayer as clearly as I knew how. I always tried to speak with complete clarity and truthfulness to those with whom I conversed about my soul. I desired that they know even about any first stirrings, and I accused myself of matter that was doubtful and questionable with arguments against myself. Thus without any duplicity or covering over I discussed my soul with him.

4. Almost from the outset I saw that he understood me through experience, which was all that I needed. For at that time I didn't understand myself or how to describe my experiences as I do now (for afterward God enabled me to understand and describe the favors that His Majesty granted me), and it was necessary that the one who understood me and explained these experiences to me should himself have experienced them. Friar Peter great-

ly enlightened me; I couldn't understand that such an experience was possible, at least as regards the visions that were not imaginative. It seemed to me that I didn't understand either how those I saw with the eyes of my soul were possible. As I have said,⁴ only those that were seen with the bodily eyes seemed to me to merit attention, and I didn't experience these.

5. This holy man enlightened me about everything and explained it to me, and he told me not to be grieved but that I should praise God and be so certain that all was from His Spirit that with the exception of the faith nothing could for me be truer or more believable. He was much consoled along with me and showed me every kind regard and favor, and ever afterward he was very solicitous for me and shared with me his own concerns and business matters. Since he saw that I had desires for what he possessed in deed—for the Lord gave me these in a very definite way—and saw that I had so much courage, he was glad to talk to me. For anyone the Lord brings to this state finds no pleasure or consolation equal to that of meeting someone to whom they think the Lord has begun to grant these desires. I couldn't then have had many more, in my opinion, and please God I may have them now.

6. He took the greatest pity on me. He told me that one of the worst trials on earth was the one I had suffered (which is contradiction on the part of good men), and that I had still a long way to go; for I was always in need and there was no one in this city who understood me. But he said that he would speak to my confessor and to the one who troubled me the most, for that was this married gentleman whom I've already mentioned. As the one who felt the greatest good-will toward me, this gentleman waged the whole opposition. He is a God-fearing and holy man; but since he had seen that I had so recently been so wretched, he wasn't able to feel assured. Thus the holy Friar Peter assured them, for he spoke to both of them and gave them motives and reasons for feeling safe and not disturbing me any more. My confessor had need of little assurance; the gentleman needed so much that the reasons were still not entirely enough, but they helped to keep him from frightening me so much.⁵

7. We agreed that from then on I would write to him about

what happened to me and that we would pray a good deal for each other. For such was his humility that he esteemed the prayers of this miserable one — which brought much embarrassment to me. He left me with the greatest consolation and happiness and the ability to feel secure in my prayer and not doubt that it was from God; he told me that if I had some doubt about anything, for the sake of greater security, I should make it known to my confessor, and that in this way I would live safely.

But I wasn't able to feel this assurance completely, because the Lord led me by the way of fear, in which I believed an experience was from the devil when they told me it was. Thus no one could make me so feel either fear or assurance that I could give my experiences more credence than that which the Lord placed in my soul. Hence even though Friar Peter consoled and calmed me, I didn't give his words such credence as to be totally without fear, especially when the Lord left me in the trials of soul of which I shall now speak. Nevertheless, I remained, as I say, very consoled. I couldn't give enough thanks to God and to my glorious father St. Joseph, for it seemed to me that since Friar Peter was the general of the commissariat, it was St. Joseph who brought him here; for the commissariat is under the guardianship of St. Joseph,⁶ to whom I prayed very much, as I did also to our Lady.

8. It sometimes happened to me — and even now it does, although not so much — that I had such very bitter trials of soul together with severe bodily torments, pains, and sicknesses that I wasn't able to help myself. At other times I had more serious bodily illnesses; yet, since I didn't have the sufferings of soul, I suffered them with great gladness. But when they were all joined together the trial was so severe that it afflicted me very much. All the favors the Lord had granted me were forgotten. There only remained the memory so as to cause pain; they were like a dream. For the intellect became so stupefied that it made me walk in the midst of a thousand doubts and suspicions making it seem that I had not understood and that perhaps I had fancied the visions and that it was enough that I was deceived without my in turn deceiving good people. It seemed to me I was so evil that all the wickedness and heresies that had arisen were due

to my sins.

9. This was a false humility the devil invented in order to disquiet me and try, if he could, to bring my soul to despair. I have so much experience now of when something is from the devil that since he at present sees that I understand him, he doesn't torment me in this way as often as he used to. He is recognized clearly by the disturbance and disquiet with which he begins, by the agitation the soul feels as long as his work lasts, by the darkness and affliction he places in the soul, and by dryness and the disinclination toward prayer or toward any good work. It seems that he smothers the soul and binds up the body so that it profits from nothing. Even though the soul knows its own wretchedness and grieves to see what we are, and even though we have exaggerated thoughts about our wickedness, as exaggerated as those mentioned,⁷ and these are genuinely felt, true humility doesn't come to the soul with agitation or disturbance, nor does it darken it or bring it dryness. Rather, true humility consoles and acts in a completely opposite way: quietly, gently, and with light. From another point of view, this pain gives the soul comfort in that the soul sees what a great favor the Lord grants it through the experience of that pain and how well employed it is. It grieves for its offenses against God; yet, on the other hand, His mercy lifts its spirits. It has the light to be confounded about itself, and it praises God for having put up with it so long. In that other humility caused by the devil, there is no light for anything good; it seems God lays everything to waste with fire and sword. The devil represents justice to the soul, and although it has faith that there is mercy—because he can't do so much as to make it lose its faith—it receives no consolation from this faith; rather, when it beholds so much mercy, this knowledge contributes to its torment because it supposes it was obliged to do more.

10. This is one of the most painful, subtle, and beguiling inventions of the devil that I have known. Thus I should like to warn your Reverence so that if he should tempt you in this way you may have some light and recognize it—if he allows the intellect to recognize it. Don't think it's a question of learning or knowing, for although everything fails me at this time, after-

ward, when I am freed from them, I know clearly that the feelings are foolish. What I've understood is that the Lord desires and permits this and gives the devil license to tempt us as He did when the devil tempted Job,⁸ although in my case—since I'm so wretched—not so severely.

11. This experience happened to me, and I remember that it happened on the day before the vigil of Corpus Christi, a feast for which I have much devotion, although not as much as I should. That time it lasted only until the feastday, for at other times the experience lasts for eight or fifteen days, or even three weeks—I don't know if any lasted longer. It comes especially during Holy Week when prayer is my delight. What happens is that my intellect is suddenly seized by things sometimes so trivial that at other times I would laugh about them. The devil makes the soul upset in every way he wants and shackles it there without its being master of itself or able to think of anything else than the absurdities he represents to it; they have almost no importance, neither do they bind nor do they loose. He only binds the soul so as to oppress it in such a way as to make it feel uneasy. So it happened to me that it seemed the devils were playing ball with my soul and that it was unable to free itself from their power. What it suffers at this time is indescribable. It seeks out relief, but God doesn't permit it to find any; there only remains the light of reason, which precedes the use of free will, but this light is not clear. I mean that the eyes are almost covered. It's like the case of those who have often gone by a certain path and, although it is night and dark outside, know where they may stumble because of a previously acquired feel for this way and because they have seen it during the daytime, and they watch out for that danger. So it is with respect to not offending God, for it seems the soul moves by habit. Let us leave aside the fact that the Lord holds it in His hands, which is what matters.

12. Faith is then deadened and put to sleep as are all the other virtues—although not lost. The soul truly believes what the Church holds, but this is pronounced vocally; it seems that on the other hand it is afflicted and made numb so that it seemingly knows God almost as it does something it hears far in the distance. Love becomes so lukewarm that if it hears someone

speaking about God it listens as though the truth about Him were something it believes to be what it is because the Church does, but there is no memory of what it has experienced within itself. Going to prayer or remaining in solitude means nothing else but more anguish, for the torment it feels within itself, without knowing why, is unbearable. In my opinion the experience is a kind of copy of hell. This is so, according to what the Lord made known to me in a vision; for the soul burns within itself without knowing who started the fire or where it comes from or how to flee from it or what to put it out with. Should it want to remedy the situation by reading, it would feel as though it didn't know how to read. Once it happened that I started to read a life of a saint to see if it would absorb me, and to console myself by what he suffered; after reading a number of lines four or five times, I understood less from them than I did at the beginning, and so I stopped. This happened to me often, although I recall this instance more particularly.

13. To carry on a conversation with anyone is worse, for the devil gives a spirit of anger so displeasing that it seems as if I want to eat everyone up, without being able to help it; or it would seem to me an accomplishment if one could control one's temper; or the Lord does so by keeping in His hands the soul that is in such a condition lest it say or do anything against its neighbors that might hurt them and offend God.

Well, with regard to going to my confessor, it is certain that what I am about to say happened many times. Although the confessors I dealt with and am dealing with at this time are very holy, they spoke harshly and scolded me; afterward when I told them, they themselves were surprised and told me that to refrain from doing so was not in their power. They tried hard not to do it again, for afterward they felt sorry and even scrupulous about having done this. But when I had similar trials of body and soul and they were determined to comfort me with compassion, they were unable to do so. They didn't say any evil words—I mean that would offend God—but said the most unpleasant allowable in a confessor. They must have meant to mortify me; and although at other times I was glad and ready to suffer such mortification, during the time of this experience

everything was a torment to me.

I also got the feeling that I was deceiving them, and I went to them and warned them very earnestly to be careful of me since I could deceive them. I saw clearly that I wouldn't do it deliberately nor would I lie to them, but everything made me afraid. One of them once told me,⁹ since he understood the temptation, not to feel grieved, that, even if I wanted to deceive him, he had the intelligence not to let himself be deceived. This gave me great consolation.

14. Sometimes (or almost ordinarily—at least, quite often) after receiving Communion I was at peace. And sometimes in approaching the Sacrament I felt at once so good in soul and body that I was surprised. It seems that in only a moment all the darknesses of the soul disperse; and once the sun is out, the soul recognizes the foolishness in which it was held. At other times, by one word the Lord spoke to me. Only by His saying, "Don't grow weary, don't be afraid," as I've already mentioned elsewhere,¹⁰ I was left completely cured; or by seeing some vision, as though I had not suffered anything. I delighted in God; I complained to Him for consenting that I should suffer so many torments. But this suffering was well repaid, for almost always the favors afterward came in great abundance. I only think that the soul comes out of the crucible like gold, more refined and purified, so as to see the Lord within itself. So afterward these trials that seemed unbearable become small, and one wants to return to suffering if the Lord will be more served by it. And even though there may be more tribulations and persecutions, if they are undergone without offending the Lord but in being happy to suffer them for Him, everything will be for a greater gain—although I don't bear them as they should be borne, but quite imperfectly.

15. At other times the experience is of another sort. It happens that all of a sudden, I believe, there is taken away the possibility of my thinking any good thing or wanting to do it, and the body and soul feel completely useless and weighed down. I don't have those other temptations and worries, but a displeasure, without understanding why; nor does anything give satisfaction to my soul. I tried to perform good exterior works

so as to occupy myself half by force—I well know the little a soul amounts to when grace is hidden. It wasn't very painful, because this sight of my lowliness gave me some satisfaction.

16. At other times I find that I can't even form in a fitting way a thought about God or of any good, or practice prayer, even though I'm in solitude; but I feel that I know Him. I understand that it is the intellect and imagination that does me harm here, for the will is all right it seems to me and disposed toward every good. But this intellect is so wild that it doesn't seem to be anything else than a frantic madman no one can tie down;¹¹ nor am I master of it long enough to keep it calm for the space of a Creed. Sometimes I laugh at myself and know my misery, and I look at this madman and leave it alone to see what it does; and—glory to God—it surprisingly enough never turns to evil but to indifferent things: to whether there is anything to do here or there or over yonder. I then know better the tremendous favor the Lord grants me when He holds this madman bound in perfect contemplation. I wonder what would happen if the persons who think I'm so good were to see this delirium. I greatly pity the soul to see it in such bad company. I want to see it free, and so I say to the Lord: "When, my God, will I finally see my soul joined together in Your praise, so that all its faculties may enjoy You? Do not permit, Lord, that it be broken any longer in pieces, for it only seems that each piece goes its own way."

I often undergo this scattering of the faculties; sometimes I understand clearly that my lack of physical health has much to do with it. I frequently recall the harm original sin did to us; this is the source, I think, of our being incapable of enjoying so much good in an integral way. And my own sins must be a cause; if I hadn't committed so many, I would be more integrated in good.

17. I also suffered another great trial. Since it seemed that I understood all the books I read that treat of prayer and that the Lord had already given me such favors, I thought I had no need of these books and so did not read them but read only lives of the saints. Since I felt so lacking in the ways they served God, reading about them seemed to benefit and encourage me. I thought it showed very little humility to think that I had attained

these favors of prayer, and since I couldn't bring myself to think otherwise, it grieved me very much until learned men and the blessed Friar Peter of Alcántara told me not to worry about it. I see clearly that I haven't begun to serve God—although His Majesty grants me favors as He does to many good people—and that I am imperfection incarnate, except in desires and in loving; in these latter I see clearly that the Lord has favored me so that I might serve Him in something. It really seems to me that I love Him, but my works and the many imperfections I see in myself sadden me.

18. At other times there comes a foolishness of soul—that's what I call it—for it seems to me that I do neither good nor evil, but follow the crowd, as they say. I do so neither in pain nor in glory, nor does it give life or death, or please or weigh me down. It doesn't seem that the soul feels anything. I think it goes about like a little donkey that's grazing; it is nourished because they give it to eat, and it eats almost without perceiving that it does so. The soul in this state must not remain without nourishing itself on some great favors from God. For in a life so miserable it doesn't regret living, and it endures life with equanimity; but it feels no movements or effects by which it might understand itself.

19. It seems to me now the soul is as though sailing with a very calm wind, for one travels far without understanding how. In those other kinds of favors the effects are so pronounced that the soul almost immediately sees its improvement; for then the desires are restless and the soul never succeeds in being satisfied. This is the experience of those to whom God gives the great impulses of love I mentioned.¹² These impulses are like some little springs I've seen flowing; they never cease to move the sand upward. This is a good example of, or comparison to, souls that reach this state: love is always stirring and thinking about what it will do. It cannot contain itself, just as that water doesn't seem to fit in the earth; but the earth casts it out of itself. So is the soul very habitually, for by reason of the love it has it doesn't rest in or contain itself. It is already soaked in this water; it would want others to drink, since it has no lack of water, so that they might help it praise God. Oh, how many times do I recall the

living water that the Lord told the Samaritan woman about! And so I am very fond of that gospel passage. Thus it is, indeed, that from the time I was a little child, without understanding this good as I do now, I often begged the Lord to give me the water. I always carried with me a painting of this episode of the Lord at the well, with the words, inscribed: *Domine, da mihi aquam*.¹³

20. This love also seems like a huge fire that always needs something to burn so as not to go out. Thus in the case of the souls I'm speaking of, even were it to cost them a great deal, they would want to carry wood so that this fire might not be extinguished. I am the kind who is made happy even with pieces of straw I can throw on it; and this I do sometimes—or many times. On occasion I laugh at myself, and at other times I grow weary. An interior stirring incites me to some service—I'm not capable of any more: arranging branches and flowers before holy images, sweeping, or putting a chapel in order, doing such lowly little things that it embarrasses me. If I performed some penance, it all amounted to little and was of such a kind that, were it not for the fact that the Lord accepted my desire, I saw that it had no importance—and I myself made fun of myself. Well, souls to whom God through His goodness gives abundantly this fire of His love suffer no small trial in lacking bodily strength to do something for Him. It is truly a great suffering. Since the soul lacks the strength to throw some wood on this fire and is dying lest the fire go out, I think that within itself it is being consumed and turned to ashes and dissolved in tears and burnt up; this is a terrible torment, although it is a delightful one.

21. Let the soul who has reached this state praise the Lord, because He has given it the bodily strength to do penance, or the learning, talents, and freedom to preach and confess and bring souls to God. For such a soul doesn't know or understand the blessing it has unless it has experienced a taste of what it is to be unable to do anything in the service of the Lord, and yet always receive a great deal. May He be blessed for everything, and may the angels give Him glory, amen.

22. I don't know if I'm doing well in writing about so many details. Since your Reverence again sent me orders not to worry about enlarging this and not to omit anything, I'm dealing clearly

and truthfully with what I remember. And I can't help but leave a lot out, because otherwise I would be wasting much more time—and I have so little as I said—¹⁴and perhaps would not put down anything worthwhile.

Chapter 31

Deals with some exterior temptations and representations of the devil and the torments he inflicted on her. Treats also of some matters very beneficial for advising persons who journey on the path of perfection.

NOW THAT I'VE MENTIONED some interior, secret temptations and disturbances the devil caused me,¹ I want to tell about others he caused almost publicly and in which one could not be mistaken that he was the source.

2. I was once in an oratory, and he appeared to me in an abominable form at my left side. Because he spoke to me, I looked particularly at his mouth—which was frightening. It seemed that a great flame, all bright without shadow, came forth from his body. He told me in a terrifying way that I had really freed myself from his hands but that he would catch me with them again. I was struck with great fear and blessed myself as best I could; he disappeared, but returned right away. This happened to me twice. I didn't know what to do. There was some holy water there, and I threw it in that direction; he never returned again.

3. Another time I was tormented for five hours with such terrible interior and exterior pains and disturbance that it didn't seem to me I could suffer them any longer. The Sisters who were with me were frightened and didn't know what to do, nor did I know how to help myself. When bodily pains and sickness become intolerable I have the custom of making interior acts of supplication to the Lord as best I can, that if His Majesty be served by my doing so He might give me patience and I might remain in this state until the end of the world. Well, since I was suffering so severely this time, I was helping myself through these acts and resolutions so as to be able to bear it. The Lord wanted me to understand it was the devil because I saw beside me a black,

very abominable little creature, snarling like one in despair that where he had tried to gain he had lost. When I saw him I laughed to myself and was not afraid. There were some Sisters there with me who were unable to help nor did they know of any remedy for so much torment; without being able to resist, I was striking myself hard on the body, head, and arms. What was worse was the interior disturbance, for I wasn't able to feel calm of any sort. I didn't dare ask for holy water lest I frighten them and they come to understand what the trouble was.

4. I often experience that there is nothing the devils flee from more — without returning — than holy water. They also flee from the cross, but they return. The power of holy water must be great. For me there is a particular and very noticeable consolation my soul experiences upon taking it. Without a doubt my soul feels ordinarily a refreshment I wouldn't know how to explain, like an interior delight that comforts it entirely. This isn't some fancy or something that has happened to me only once, but something that has happened often and that I've observed carefully. Let us say the relief is like that coming to a person, very hot and thirsty, on drinking a jar of cold water; it seems the refreshment is felt all over. I consider everything ordained by the Church to be important, and I rejoice to see the power of those words recited over the water so that its difference from unblessed water becomes so great.

5. Well, since the torment didn't stop, I said: "If you wouldn't laugh, I'd ask for holy water." They brought it to me and sprinkled some on me, but it didn't help. I threw some toward where the devil was, and instantly he went away and all the illness left me as if it were taken away by hand, except that I remained weary as though I had been badly beaten with a stick. It did me a lot of good to reflect upon what he will do to the soul he possesses as his own if even when the soul and body don't belong to him, he causes so much harm — when the Lord permits. It made me again eager to be freed from such dreadful company.

6. Another time, not long ago, the same thing happened to me; although it didn't last as long, and I was alone. I called for holy water, and those who entered after the devil had already gone (for they were two nuns well worthy of belief, who would

by no means tell a lie) smelled a foul stench like that of brimstone. I didn't smell it. It so lingered that one could notice it.

Another time I was in the choir, and there came upon me a strong impulse toward recollection. I left the choir so that the others wouldn't notice, although all of them heard the striking of loud blows near the place where I was; I heard some coarse words next to me as though the devils were plotting something, although I didn't understand what. But I was so absorbed in prayer I didn't understand anything nor did I have any fear. It happened, almost every time, when the Lord granted me the favor of persuading some soul to advance in perfection.

7. It is certain that what I shall now tell happened to me. (And there are many witnesses to this, especially the one who is now my confessor² since he saw it written in a letter; without my telling him who the person was to whom the letter belonged, he knew very well who it was.)

A person came to me who had been in mortal sin for two and a half years. It was one of the most abominable I've heard of, and in all this time he hadn't confessed or made amends; and he was saying Mass. Although he was confessing other sins, of this one he asked how he could confess something so ugly. He had a great desire to give it up, but he wasn't able to help himself. He made me feel great pity, and my seeing that he offended God in such a way caused me deep sorrow. I promised him I would beg God very much to liberate him and that I would get others better than myself to do the same, and I wrote to him through a certain person he told me I could give the letters to. And so it happened that after receiving the first letter he went to confession. For God desired (through the many very holy persons to whose prayers I recommended him) to grant this soul that mercy; and I, although miserable, did what I could with great care. He wrote to me that he was so much better that for days he had not fallen into the sin, but that the torment the temptation gave him was so intense it seemed from what he suffered he was in hell; he asked me to commend him to God. I in turn recommended him to my Sisters through whose prayers the Lord must have granted me this favor, for they took the matter very much to heart. No one could guess who the person was. I begged

His Majesty to mitigate those torments and temptations and that those devils would come to afflict me, provided that I would not offend the Lord in anything. As a result, for a month I suffered severe torments; it was during this time that these two things I mentioned happened.³

8. The Lord was pleased that they leave him; this he wrote to me, for I told him what I was going through during that month. His soul was fortified, and he was left completely free. He didn't have enough of thanking God and me—as though I had done anything. But the reputation I had from the fact that the Lord granted me favors benefited him. He said that when he found himself very distressed he read my letters, and the temptation left him. He was very impressed by what I had suffered and how he had been freed. Even I was amazed, and I would have suffered many more years to see that soul free. May the Lord be praised for everything, for the prayer of those who serve Him (as I believe do these Sisters in this house)⁴ can do much. But since I sought these prayers, the devils must have been more angry with me; and the Lord on account of my sins permitted this.

9. Also one night during this time I thought they were choking me; after much holy water had been sprinkled around, I saw a great multitude of them go by, as though they were being thrown down a precipice. There are so many times that these cursed creatures torment me, and so little is the fear I now have of them, seeing that they cannot stir unless the Lord allows them, that I would tire your Reverence and tire myself if I told about all these instances.

10. May what was said be of help that the true servant of God might pay no attention to the scarecrows the devils set up in order to cause fear. We should know that each time we pay no attention to them they are weakened, and the soul gains much more mastery. Some great benefit always remains, which I won't go into so as not to enlarge. I shall only mention what happened to me on the night of All Souls: while I was in the oratory after having recited a nocturn and while saying some very devotional prayers that come at the end, a devil appeared on the book so that I couldn't finish the prayer. I blessed myself, and he went

away. When I began again to recite the prayers, he returned. I believe it was three times I began, and until I threw holy water at him I couldn't finish. I saw that some souls left purgatory at that instant; little must have been lacking to their freedom, and I wondered if he had aimed at preventing this.

A few times I've seen him in physical form, but many times with no physical form — as for instance in the vision mentioned above⁵ in which without seeing any form one knows he is there.

11. I also want to tell the following because it frightened me a lot: one day on the feast of the Trinity, being in the choir of a certain monastery and in rapture, I saw a great battle of devils against angels. I couldn't understand what that vision meant. In less than fifteen days it became easily understandable on account of a certain conflict that arose between people of prayer and many who were not, and a lot of harm was done in the house in which it took place. It was a battle that lasted a long time and caused much disquiet.

At other times I saw a large multitude of devils around me, and it seemed that a great brightness encircled me, and this prevented them from reaching me. I understood that God was watching over me so that they could not get to me in order to make me offend Him. From what I sometimes saw in myself, I understood that it was a true vision. The fact is that now I have understood so well the little bit of power he has, provided I'm not against God, that I have almost no fear. The powers of devils are nothing if these devils do not find souls cowardly and surrendered to them; it is with such souls that they show their power. Sometimes, in the temptations I already mentioned,⁶ it seemed to me that all the vanities and weaknesses of the past were again awakening within me; I had really to commend myself to God. At once the torment came of thinking that since those thoughts arose in me the favors I experienced must all be from the devil. It seemed to me that there shouldn't have been even the first stirrings of a bad thought in one who was receiving so many favors from the Lord. But then my confessor put me at peace.

12. At other times I was severely tormented — and even now

I'm tormented by it—upon seeing that I was esteemed, especially by eminent persons, and that they spoke very well of me. From this esteem I've suffered and do suffer a great deal. I then look at the life of Christ and of the saints, and it seems to me I'm going in the opposite direction since they didn't advance except through contempt and insults. It makes me walk in fear and as one who doesn't dare raise her head or want to be seen. This I don't do when I'm experiencing persecutions; then the soul walks with head held high, although the body feels them and, from another perspective, I am afflicted; but I don't know how this can be. Yet so it happens, for it then seems that the soul is in its kingdom and puts everything under its feet.

Sometimes I experienced the following temptation, which lasted for many days; it seemed to be virtue and humility on the one hand, but now I see plainly it was a temptation (a Dominican friar, a very learned man,⁷ explained it to me clearly): when I thought these favors the Lord grants me would become known publicly, the torment was so excessive that my soul was deeply disturbed. The disturbance reached the point that, in reflecting upon it, it seemed to me I was more willing to be buried alive than have these favors made known publicly. So when these experiences of recollection or rapture began, which I couldn't resist even in public, I was left so ashamed afterward that I didn't want to be where anyone would see me.

13. Once when I was very worried about this, the Lord asked me why I feared since only two things could happen from it: they would either criticize me or praise Him. And He explained that those who believed in the experience would praise Him and that those who did not would condemn me, without fault; that either outcome would be advantageous to me, and that I shouldn't be anxious. This calmed me a great deal and consoles me when I recall it. The temptation reached the point that I wanted to leave that place and transfer my dowry to another monastery much more enclosed than the one I lived in, for I had heard it praised highly. It also belongs to my order;⁸ and it was very far from here, which is what would have consoled me: to be some place where they wouldn't know me. But my confessor never allowed me to leave.

14. These fears took away to a great extent my freedom of spirit; afterward I came to understand that they didn't come from genuine humility, since they disturbed me so much. And the Lord taught me this truth: that I should be determined and certain that His favor was not some good thing belonging to me but that it belonged to God; that just as I wasn't sorry to hear other persons praised (rather I was very happy and consoled to see that God revealed Himself in them), I should neither be sorry that His works be shown in me.

15. I also went to another extreme. I begged God—and I had a special prayer—that, when it appeared to others there was some good in me, His Majesty would make known to them my sins so that they might see how these favors were bestowed without any merit on my part. I always desire a great deal that my lack of merit be known. My confessor advised against this special prayer. But until very recently, if I saw that a person thought highly of me, in roundabout ways, or as I could, I got them to know of my sins; in this way it seems I found relief. My confessor also disapproved of this latter way of acting and made me scrupulous about it.

16. Such feelings derived, in my opinion, not from humility but from a temptation. It seemed to me I was deceiving everyone. And although it is true that they were being deceived in thinking there was some good in me, it was not my desire to deceive them, nor did I ever have such an aim; but the Lord permits such things for some reason. So even with my confessors, if I saw it wasn't necessary I didn't discuss anything, for doing so would have made me very scrupulous.

I understand now that all these little fears and pains and this appearance of humility came from serious imperfection and from not being mortified. For a soul surrendered into God's hands doesn't care whether they say good or evil about it. It thoroughly understands—since the Lord desires to grant it the favor of understanding this—that of itself it has nothing. Let it trust in Him who bestows the favor, for He will know why He makes the favor known; and let it be prepared for persecution, which in these our times will certainly come whenever the Lord desires that it be known He grants these kinds of favors to a certain

person. There are a thousand eyes ready to turn on a soul receiving such favors, but on a thousand souls of another kind there's not even one eye ready to turn.

17. Truthfully, there is no small reason for fear, but this must have been my own fear—not humility but pusillanimity. A soul that God permits to advance in this way before the eyes of the world can well prepare itself for martyrdom at the hands of this world; because if it doesn't want to die to the world, the world will itself put it to death. I really don't see anything in the world that pleases me other than its intolerance of faults in the good, forcing them to be perfect through its criticisms. If someone is not perfect, I say that more courage is necessary to follow the path to perfection than to suffer a quick martyrdom. For perfection is not attained quickly, unless the Lord wants to grant someone this favor by a special privilege. Seeing the soul begin, the world wants it to be perfect, and at a thousand leagues distance it thinks something is a fault which perhaps is a virtue; the one who condemns the action uses that same action as a vice, and thereby judges others. These souls must not have the means to eat or sleep or even, as they say, to breathe; and the more they are esteemed the more they must forget they are still in the body, no matter how perfect the soul is. They still live on earth subject to their miseries, however much they may have trampled them under foot. So, as I say, great courage is necessary because the poor soul has not begun to walk, and they want it to be flying; it still hasn't conquered its passions, and they want it to be as strong in great occasions of sin as they read the saints were after being confirmed in grace.

What it undergoes in this situation is something to praise the Lord for, and it also excites the heart to great pity; for many souls turn back since the poor things don't know how to help themselves. And I believe mine would have turned back, if the Lord hadn't so mercifully done everything; for your Reverence will see that there was no other ability in me than to fall and rise.

18. I'd like to know how to speak of this condition because I believe many souls who want to fly before God gives them wings are deceived in this matter. (I believe I have already used this comparison,⁹ but it applies well here.) I'll discuss this because

I see some souls very afflicted for this reason. Since they are beginning with great desires, fervor, and determination to make progress in virtue — and some for His sake abandon everything as far as externals are concerned — and since in other persons who have grown much more in perfection they see highly virtuous actions granted by the Lord, and unobtainable by ourselves, and see in all the books written on prayer and contemplation the things we must do in order to mount up to this dignity, and since they cannot immediately bring this about in themselves, they become dejected. These virtuous actions would be, for example: not caring at all if others speak badly of us but rather being happier than when they speak well; little esteem for honor; a detachment from relatives so that if these relatives don't practice prayer one wouldn't desire to speak with them but would rather grow tired of doing so; and many other things of this kind which in my opinion God must give these souls. For I think these virtues are already supernatural goods, or against our natural inclination. Let not these souls become anxious, let them hope in the Lord; through their prayer and their doing what they can, His Majesty will bring it about that what they now have in desires they shall possess in deed. It is very necessary for this weak nature of ours to have great confidence and not grow faint-hearted or start thinking that even if we make efforts we shall still fail to gain the victory.

19. And since I have a lot of experience of this, I shall say something for the sake of informing your Reverence.¹⁰ Don't think, even though it may seem so to you, that virtue has already been gained if it hasn't been tried by its contrary. We must always be mistrustful of ourselves and never grow negligent as long as we live. For many things immediately cling to us if, as I say, the grace to know what everything is, is not yet given to us completely; in this life there is never anything that hasn't many dangers. It seemed to me a few years ago not only that I was detached from my relatives but that they bored me; so I felt certain that I couldn't bear their conversation. A very important business matter came about and I had to stay with my sister whom I previously loved very much.¹¹ But in conversation with her, even though she is better than I, I didn't feel any affinity.

Since, being married, she is in a different state of life, the conversation couldn't always be what I'd have wanted, and as much as possible I remained alone. Yet I saw that her troubles grieved and worried me more than would those of a neighbor. In the end, I understood I wasn't as free as I thought and that I still had to flee the occasion so that this virtue that the Lord had begun to give would grow; thus with His favor I strove to do so ever after this.

20. When the Lord begins to give a virtue, it should be highly esteemed; and we should in no way place ourselves in the danger of losing it. This is true in matters concerning our honor and in many others. Your Reverence should believe that not all those of us who think we are detached, are in fact; it is necessary not to grow careless in this matter. Let any person who wants to advance and yet feels concerned about some point of honor believe me and strive to overcome this attachment, which is like a chain that cannot be broken by any file but only by God through our prayer and earnest cooperation. It seems to me that such attachment is a shackle on this road—I am astonished at the harm it does.

I see some persons holy in their works, who perform such mighty ones that the people marvel. May God help me! Why is this soul still on earth? Why isn't it at the summit of perfection? What is this? Who detains the one who has done so much for God? Oh, what does a point of honor have . . . ! And the worst that it has is that it doesn't have anyone to understand what it has. The reason is that the devil sometimes makes the soul think it is obliged to receive honor.

21. Well, let them believe me (believe for the love of the Lord this little ant, for He wants it to speak); if they don't remove this caterpillar, even though it doesn't damage the tree completely, since some other virtues will remain, all the virtues will be worm-eaten. The tree isn't a beautiful one, nor does it flourish, nor does it even allow the others that are near it to flourish. The fruit of good example that it gives is not healthy; it will last only a short while. I often say that however small the point of honor may be, the concern for it is like that of sound coming from an organ when the timing or measure is off; all the music becomes

dissonant. This concern is something that does damage to the soul in all areas, but in this path of prayer it is a pestilence.

22. We are striving to be joined with God through union, and we seek to follow His counsels coming from Christ, who was weighed down by injuries and testimonies against Him, and we desire our honor and credit to remain intact? It's not possible to reach this union, for we aren't taking the same road. The Lord comes to the soul if we make the effort and strive to give up our rights in many matters. Some will say: "I have no occasion to practice this detachment from my rights, nor does any come along." I believe that the Lord will not want anyone with the determination to practice this detachment to lose so much good. His Majesty will ordain so many things by which the soul can gain this virtue that it will not want so many. All hands to the task!

23. I want to mention the trivial and insignificant things I did when I began—or some of them: little straws I mentioned¹² that I put on the fire, for I'm not capable of anything more. The Lord receives all; may He be blessed forever.

Among my faults I had this one: Because of pure negligence and involvement in other vanities, I knew little about the Office in choir and what had to be done there; but I saw other novices who could teach me. It occurred to me not to ask them so that they wouldn't find out that I knew so little, and I wouldn't thereby give them bad example. Such an attitude is very common. But once God opened my eyes a little, even though I knew, when there was the smallest doubt, I asked the youngest religious. I lost neither honor nor credit; rather the Lord, in my opinion, gave me a better memory afterward.

I didn't know how to sing well. I was so worried when I hadn't studied what they had entrusted to me (not because I wanted to avoid committing a fault before the Lord, since being bothered about that would have been virtuous, but because of the many that were listening to me), that just out of a sheer cult of honor I was so disturbed that I said much less than I knew. I afterward took it upon myself, when I didn't know the assignment very well, simply to say so. I felt this very much in the beginning, but afterward I enjoyed it. And it happened that when I began

not to care if they learned I didn't know that I recited much better, and in the effort to get rid of the accursed honor, I came to know how to do what I considered an honor, which, incidentally, each one understands in his own way.

24. By means of these trifles, which are nothing—and a complete nothing am I, since this pained me—little by little one makes progress in deeds. And His Majesty gives value to little things like these that are done for Him, and He gives the help for doing greater things. So, with respect to humility it occurred to me, upon seeing that all were advancing except myself—for I was never good for anything—to gather up all their mantles when they left the choir. It seemed to me I was serving those angels that were praising God there. I did this until—I don't know how—they came to know about it. This caused me no little embarrassment because my virtue hadn't reached the point of desiring that they know these things; and this wasn't out of humility but lest they laugh at me, since these things were such trifles.

25. O my Lord! What a shame it is to see so much wickedness and to tell about some grains of sand, which even then I didn't lift from the ground for Your service, since everything I did was enveloped in a thousand miseries! The waters of Your grace didn't flow yet under these grains of sand in order to raise them up. O my Creator! Who could find among so many evils something of substance to relate, since I am telling about the great favors I've received from You! So it is, my Lord, that I don't know how my heart can bear it or how anyone who reads this can fail to abhor me in observing that such marvelous favors were so poorly repaid and that I have no shame, in the end, to recount these services as my own. Yes, I am ashamed, my Lord; but having nothing else to tell about the part I played makes me speak of such lowly beginnings so that anyone who did great things in the beginning may have hope; since it seems the Lord has taken my early actions into account, He will do so more with theirs. May it please His Majesty to give me grace so that I might not always remain at the beginning, amen.

Chapter 32

Discusses how the Lord desired to put her spirit in a place in hell she had deserved because of her sins. Gives a brief account of what was shown her there. Begins to deal with the way in which the monastery of St. Joseph, where she now is, was founded.

A LONG TIME AFTER THE LORD had already granted me many of the favors I've mentioned¹ and other very lofty ones, while I was in prayer one day, I suddenly found that, without knowing how, I had seemingly been put in hell. I understood that the Lord wanted me to see the place the devils had prepared there for me and which I merited because of my sins. This experience took place within the shortest space of time, but even were I to live for many years I think it would be impossible for me to forget it. The entrance it seems to me was similar to a very long and narrow alleyway, like an oven, low and dark and confined; the floor seemed to me to consist of dirty, muddy water emitting a foul stench and swarming with putrid vermin. At the end of the alleyway a hole that looked like a small cupboard was hollowed out in the wall; there I found I was placed in a cramped condition. All of this was delightful to see in comparison with what I felt there. What I have described can hardly be exaggerated.

2. What I felt, it seems to me, cannot even begin to be exaggerated; nor can it be understood. I experienced a fire in the soul that I don't know how I could describe. The bodily pains were so unbearable that though I had suffered excruciating ones in this life and according to what doctors say, the worst that can be suffered on earth (for all my nerves were shrunken when I was paralyzed,² plus many other sufferings of many kinds that I endured, and even some, as I said,³ caused by the devil), these were all nothing in comparison with the ones I experienced there. I saw furthermore that they would go on without end and without ever ceasing. This, however, was nothing next to the soul's agonizing: a constriction, a suffocation, an affliction so keenly felt and with such a despairing and tormenting unhappiness that I don't know how to word it strongly enough. To

say the experience is as though the soul were continually being wrested from the body would be insufficient, for it would make you think somebody else is taking away the life, whereas here it is the soul itself that tears itself in pieces. The fact is that I don't know how to give a sufficiently powerful description of that interior fire and that despair, coming in addition to such extreme torments and pains. I didn't see who inflicted them on me, but, as it seemed to me, I felt myself burning and crumbling; and I repeat the worst was that interior fire and despair.

3. Being in such an unwholesome place, so unable to hope for any consolation, I found it impossible either to sit down or to lie down, nor was there any room, even though they put me in this kind of hole made in the wall. Those walls, which were terrifying to see, closed in on themselves and suffocated everything. There was no light, but all was enveloped in the blackest darkness. I don't understand how this could be, that everything painful to see was visible.

The Lord didn't want me to see any more of hell at that time. Afterward I saw another vision of frightful things, the punishment of some vices. With respect to the sight they seemed much more frightening, but since I didn't feel the pain, they didn't cause me so much fear. For in the former vision the Lord wanted me actually to feel those spiritual torments and afflictions, as though the body were suffering. I don't know how such an experience was possible, but I well understood that it was a great favor and that the Lord desired me to see with my own eyes the place His mercy had freed me from. It amounts to nothing to hear these pains spoken of, nor have I at other times thought about different torments (although not many, since my soul did not fare well with such fearful thoughts; that is, that devils tear off the flesh with pincers, or other various tortures I've read about) that are anything in comparison to this pain; it is something different. In sum, as a resemblance to the reality, being burned here on earth is very little when compared to being burned by the fire that is there.

4. I was left terrified, and still am now in writing about this almost six years later, and it seems to me that on account of the fear my natural heat fails me right here and now. Thus I recall

no time of trial or suffering in which it doesn't seem to me that everything that can be suffered here on earth is nothing; so I think in a way we complain without reason. Hence I repeat that this experience was one of the greatest favors the Lord granted me because it helped me very much to lose fear of the tribulations and contradictions of this life as well as to grow strong enough to suffer them and give thanks to the Lord who freed me, as it now appears to me, from such everlasting and terrible evils.

5. Since that time, as I say, everything seems to me easy when compared to undergoing for a moment what I suffered there in hell. I marvel how after having often read books in which the pains of hell were somewhat explained I didn't fear them or take them for what they were. Where was I? How could I find relaxation in anything when I was causing myself to go to such an evil place? May You be blessed, my God, forever! How obvious it is that You loved me much more than I did myself! How many times, my Lord, have You freed me from so dark a prison, and how often have I put myself in it again against Your will!

6. From this experience also flow the great impulses to help souls and the extraordinary pain that is caused me by the many that are condemned (especially the Lutherans, for they were through baptism members of the Church). It seems certain to me that in order to free one alone from such appalling torments I would suffer many deaths very willingly. I notice that if we see a person, whom in a special way we love here below, with a great trial or suffering, it seems that our own very nature invites us to compassion; and if their trial is great, we ourselves become distressed. Well, who is there who can suffer seeing a soul in the supreme trial of trials that has no end? No heart can bear it without great pain. For if here on earth in knowing that finally life will end and that it has its limit, we are still moved to so much compassion, I don't know how we can rest in regard to the other endless life when we see how the devil brings so many souls each day with himself to hell.

7. This awareness also makes me desire that in a matter so important we don't grow satisfied with anything less than doing all we can on our part; let us neglect nothing, and may it please

the Lord that He be served by giving us the grace to do all we can. I sometimes reflect that even though I was terribly wicked, I had some concern about serving God, that I didn't do certain things I see are done in the world as if they amount to nothing, and, finally, that I suffered great illnesses and with a lot of patience, which the Lord gave me, yet wasn't inclined to criticize or speak evil of anyone—nor does it seem to me I could have wished evil on anyone. Neither was I covetous, nor do I ever recall being envious in such way that it would have been a grave offense against the Lord; and there are some other things—for even though I was so wretched, I usually had the fear of God. Yet, in spite of all this, I see the place the devils had already prepared for me. Indeed, on account of my faults, it seems to me I still merited greater punishment. But, nonetheless, I say that it was a terrible torment and that it is a dangerous thing to be satisfied with ourselves, nor should the soul that falls at every step into mortal sin be at rest or content. But for the love of God we should avoid the occasions; the Lord will help us, as He did me. May it please His Majesty not to let me out of His hand lest I fall again, for I have already seen where I would end up. May the Lord not allow it because of who His Majesty is, amen.

8. After having seen this and other things and secrets that the Lord, because of who He is, desired to show me about the glory He will give to the good and the suffering that will go to the evil, I was anxious to know the manner and way in which I could do penance for so much evil and merit something in order to gain so much good. I was desiring to flee people and withdraw completely from the world. My spirit was not at rest, yet the disquiet was not a disturbing but a delightful one. It was obvious that it was from God and that His Majesty had given the soul heat so as to digest other heavier foods than those it was eating.

9. I was thinking about what I could do for God, and I thought that the first thing was to follow the call to the religious life, which His Majesty had given me, by keeping my rule as perfectly as I could. Even though there were many servants of God in the house where I was, and He was very well served in it, the nuns

because of great necessity often went out to places where they could stay — with the decorum proper to religious. Also, the rule was not kept in its prime rigor, but was observed the way it was in the whole order, that is, according to the bull of mitigation.⁴ There were also other disadvantages; it seemed to me the monastery had a lot of comfort since it was a large and pleasant one. But this disadvantage of going out, even though I was one who did so a great deal, was now a serious one for me because some persons to whom the superiors couldn't say "no" liked to have me in their company; and when urged, the superiors ordered me to go. So, by reason of their commands I wasn't able to remain in the monastery much. The devil must have helped partly to keep me from staying home; for since I was sharing with some of the nuns what those with whom I was consulting were teaching me, much good was being done.

10. It happened once while I was with someone that she mentioned to me and to the others in the group that if we couldn't be nuns like the discalced, it would still be possible to found a monastery.⁵ Since I was having these desires, I began to discuss the matter with that lady companion of mine,⁶ the widow I mentioned, who had the same desires. She began to draw up plans to provide the new house with income. Now I see that there was little chance these plans would succeed, but our desire made us think they would. Yet since, on the other hand, I was so perfectly content in the house in which I was⁷ because it was very much to my liking and the cell in which I lived was just what I wanted, I was still delaying. Nevertheless, we agreed to pray fervently to God over the matter.

11. One day after Communion, His Majesty earnestly commanded me to strive for this new monastery with all my powers, and He made great promises that it would be founded and that He would be highly served in it. He said it should be called St. Joseph and that this saint would keep watch over us at one door, and our Lady at the other, that Christ would remain with us, and that it would be a star shining with great splendor. He said that even though religious orders were mitigated one shouldn't think He was little served in them; He asked what would become of the world if it were not for religious and said that I should

tell my confessor⁸ what He commanded, that He was asking him not to go against this or hinder me from doing it.

12. This vision had such great effects, and this locution the Lord granted was of such a nature, that I couldn't doubt it was from God. I felt the severest pain because on the one hand the terrible disturbances and trials the new monastery would cost me were partly represented to me, and on the other hand I was very happy in my own monastery. Although I had been discussing it before, I hadn't done so with as much determination or certitude as was necessary to bring it about. These words seemed to compel me, and since I saw I would be starting something that would disturb my calm, I was doubtful about what to do. But often the Lord returned to speak to me about this new monastery, presenting me with so many clear reasons and arguments that I saw it was His will, and I could no longer help but tell my confessor. I told him in writing all that happened.⁹

13. He didn't dare tell me definitely to forget about the new monastery; but he was aware that it wasn't feasible from the viewpoint of natural reason since my companion who was the one who would have had to provide for the foundation had little or almost no possible means for it. He told me to discuss it with my superior and to do what the superior advised. I didn't discuss these visions with the superior, but that lady who wanted to found this monastery spoke with him. The provincial¹⁰ assented very readily, for he is fond of all religious life, and he gave all the necessary support and told her that he would accept that house under his jurisdiction. They discussed the income it would have to have, and for many reasons we never desired that it would have more than thirteen nuns.¹¹

Before we began to discuss it, we wrote to the holy friar Peter of Alcántara about everything that was happening. He counseled us not to fail to make the foundation, and he gave us his opinion about it all.

14. Hardly had the knowledge of it begun to spread throughout the city when the great persecution that cannot be briefly described came upon us: gossip, derision, saying that it was foolishness. As for me, they said I was well off in my own monastery; with regard to my companion, there was so much persecution

that she became very upset. I didn't know what to do; it seemed to me they were partly right. While thus very wearied and recommending myself to God, His Majesty began to console and encourage me. He told me that in this I would see what the saints who had founded religious orders had suffered, that I would have to suffer much more persecution than I could imagine, and that we shouldn't let it bother us. He told me some things to tell my companion, and, what I marvelled at most, we were immediately consoled about what happened and were left with the courage to withstand all. Indeed, among people of prayer and, in fact, throughout the whole city there was hardly a person who was not then against us; the project seemed to almost everyone to be a lot of nonsense.

15. There was so much talk and such an outcry in my own monastery that the provincial thought it would be imprudent to go against all; so he changed his mind and didn't want to accept the foundation under his jurisdiction. He said the income was not secure, that it was small, and that there was strong opposition; and, all things considered, it seems he was right. Finally, he abandoned the project and refused to accept it. For us who, it seemed, had already received the first blows, the refusal was most painful; especially in my case, it was painful to see the provincial opposed to it; had he accepted it, I'd have been excused by all. As for my companion, they didn't want to give her absolution unless she gave up the idea, because they said she was obliged to remove the scandal.

16. She went to a most learned man, a very great servant of God of the order of St. Dominic, to tell him about it and give him an account of everything.¹² She did this even before the provincial had withdrawn his permission, for in the entire place there was no one who wanted to give us an opinion; and thus it was said to be just one of our own whims. This lady told the holy man about everything and of the income she had from her estate. She had a strong desire that he would help us because he was the most learned man in the city at that time and there were few in his order more learned than he. I told him all we were thinking of doing and some of the reasons. I didn't say anything about any revelation but mentioned only the natural

reasons that urged me, for I didn't want him to give any opinion other than one in reply to these reasons. He told us to give him a period of eight days to answer and asked if we were determined to do what he would tell us. I told him we were. But even though I told him this and it seems to me I would have done so (although at that time I didn't see any other way of going forward with the project), never did the assurance leave me that the foundation would be made. My companion had more faith; she never for anything they said to her decided to abandon it.

17. Yet, as I say, I thought it would be impossible to give up the project. I believed that since it didn't go against Sacred Scripture or against the laws of the Church, which we are obliged to keep, the revelation was true. Although the undertaking really seemed to me to be from God, if that learned man had told me we couldn't do it without offending God and that we were doing something against the demands of a good conscience, I think I would have immediately given it up or sought another means. But the Lord didn't give me any other than this one.

This servant of God told me afterward that he had taken it upon himself and was fully determined to insist that we give up the foundation, for he had already heard news about the public outcry; also it seemed to him as it did to everyone to be foolish. And he went on that when a certain gentleman had learned we had gone to him, that gentleman informed him to be careful and not help us. But then when he began to consider how he would answer us and to think about the matter and our intention and our plan of religious life, he felt assured it would be very much in the service of God and that we shouldn't fail to go ahead with it. So he answered us that we should hurry to bring the project to a conclusion, and he mentioned the manner and way in which it should be done. He said that although the estate was small, one had to trust in God about something, that anyone who would oppose the plan should come to him and that he would answer; in this way he always helped us, as I shall say afterward.¹³

18. We were very consoled by his reply. On account of his help some holy persons who were usually opposed to us were more satisfied; and some helped us. Among them was the holy gentleman¹⁴ whom I already mentioned, who because he real-

ly was holy and it seemed to him that our plan bore promise of great perfection, since our whole basis for wanting to carry it out was prayer — although the means seemed to him very difficult and impractical — he gave his opinion that it could be something from God. It seemed the Lord Himself moved him to this. And the Lord did the same to the Master, who is the cleric,¹⁵ the servant of God I mentioned I had spoken to before, and who is an example to the entire city. He is a person whom God keeps there as a help and advantage for many souls, and now he agreed to help me in the project. Being at this juncture, always having the help of many prayers, and having already bought the house in a good section, I didn't worry about it being small. The Lord had told me to get started as best I could, that afterward I would see what His Majesty would do.¹⁶ And how well I have seen it! Thus, though I knew the income was small, I believed the Lord would help us and arrange things through other means.

Chapter 33

Continues on the same subject, about the foundation dedicated to the glorious St. Joseph. Tells how she was ordered not to become involved with the project, of the time she abandoned it, of some trials she had, and of how the Lord consoled her.

NOW THEN, WHEN THE BUSINESS matters had reached this state and were at such a point that in another day the deeds were to be drawn up and the matter concluded, our Father Provincial changed his mind.¹ I believe this was providential, as it appeared to be afterward. Since the prayers were so many, the Lord was perfecting the work and ordaining that it be done in another way. Because my provincial didn't want to receive the house under his jurisdiction, my confessor² ordered me not to be involved with the foundation any more — although the Lord knows the great trials and afflictions it had cost me to bring the project to that state. Even though my provincial had ordered me to do what I had done thus far, the con-

viction became greater that it was all the foolishness of women—and the criticism of me increased—when the endeavor was abandoned in this way.

2. I was very much disliked throughout my monastery³ because I had wanted to found a more enclosed monastery. They said I was insulting them; that in my own monastery I could also serve God since there were others in it better than I; that I had no love for the house; that it would be better to procure income for this place than for some other. Several of them said I should be thrown into the prison cell;⁴ others—very few—defended me somewhat. I saw clearly that in many matters my opponents were right, and sometimes I gave them explanations. Yet since I couldn't mention the main factor, which was that the Lord had commanded me to do this, I didn't know how to act; so I remained silent about the other things. God granted me the very great favor that none of all this disturbed me; rather, I gave up the plan with as much ease and contentment as I would have if it hadn't cost me anything. No one could believe this, not even the very persons of prayer who knew me. They thought I was very afflicted and ashamed; even my own confessor couldn't believe it. As for myself, since it seemed to me I had done everything I could, I thought I wasn't obliged to do what the Lord had commanded me; and I remained in the house, for I was very satisfied and pleased there. Although I could never stop believing that the foundation would come about, I no longer saw the means, nor did I know how or when; but I was very certain that it would.

3. What caused me great anguish was something my confessor once wrote to me. It was as though I had done something against his will. (The Lord also must have desired that in that area which would be most painful to me I wouldn't be lacking a trial.) So in the midst of this multitude of persecutions, when I thought comfort would be coming from him, he wrote me that I should now be able to see from what had happened that the project had been all a dream, that I should make amends from then on by not desiring to go out for anything or to speak any more about it, since I had seen the scandal that had occurred; and he mentioned other things, all of them giving me pain. What he said

grieved me more than everything else put together, since it seemed to me that if I had been an occasion or had been at fault for some offense against God, and that if these visions had been an illusion, all the prayer I had experienced was self-deception, and that I was being misled and going astray. This made me so extremely distressed I was thrown into complete confusion and severely afflicted. But the Lord, who never failed me, who in all these trials I enumerated often consoled and fortified me — there is no reason to mention it all specifically here — then told me not to be anxious; that I had served God a great deal and had not offended Him in that project; that I should do what my confessor ordered me to do by being silent for the present, until it would come time to return to the task. I was left so consoled and happy that the persecution hanging over me seemed to be all nothing.

4. In this way the Lord taught me what a tremendous good it is to suffer trials and persecutions for Him. For the increase of love of God I saw in my soul and many other things reached such a point that I was amazed; and this makes me unable to stop desiring trials. The other persons thought I was very ashamed; and yes, I would have been if the Lord hadn't favored me to such an extreme with so marvelous a gift. Then the impulses of love of God that I mentioned⁵ began to grow in intensity, and the raptures became greater, although I remained silent and didn't mention these gains. The holy Dominican friar⁶ still thought it certain, as I did, that the foundation would be made. Since I didn't want to get involved in it so as not to go against obedience to my confessor, he conferred about the matter with my companion; and they wrote to Rome to start negotiating for it.

5. Likewise the devil began striving here through one person and another to make known that I had received some revelation about this work. Some persons came to me with great fear to tell me we were in trouble and that it could happen that others might accuse me of something and report me to the Inquisitors. This amused me and made me laugh, for I never had any fear of such a possibility. If anyone were to see that I went against the slightest ceremony of the Church in a matter of faith, I myself

knew well that I would die a thousand deaths for the faith or for any truth of Sacred Scripture. And I said they shouldn't be afraid about these possible accusations; that it would be pretty bad for my soul if there were something in it of the sort that I should have to fear the Inquisition; that I thought that if I did have something to fear I'd go myself to seek out the Inquisitors; and that if I were accused, the Lord would free me, and I would be the one to gain. I discussed this with my Dominican Father who, as I say, was so learned I was able to feel fully assured with what he told me. I told him then as clearly as I could about all the visions and my manner of prayer and the great favors the Lord granted me. I begged him to consider my prayer very carefully and tell me if there was something opposed to Sacred Scripture and what he felt about it all. He assured me very much, and, in my opinion, it benefited him. For although he was very good, from then on he dedicated himself much more to prayer and withdrew to a monastery of his order where there was much solitude so that he could practice prayer better.⁷ He remained there more than two years, but then obedience drew him out—which he felt keenly—since, on account of the kind of person he was, they needed him.

6. To a certain extent, because of the great loss this was to me, I felt it very much when he went away, although I didn't try to prevent him. But I understood what he gained; for when I was very troubled about his leaving, the Lord told me I should be consoled and not troubled, that he was being well guided. His soul improved so much in that place, and he made such spiritual progress, that he told me, when he came back, that he wouldn't have given up going there for anything in the world. And I, too, was able to agree because previously he assured me and consoled me only by his learning, but now he did so also through his spiritual experience, for he was receiving a number of supernatural experiences. And God brought him at the time that His Majesty saw there was need for help in the work of founding this monastery which His Majesty desired.

7. Well, for five or six months I remained in this silence, not becoming involved in or speaking of this matter, and the Lord never commanded me to do so. I didn't understand why, but

I couldn't get it out of my mind that the foundation would be accomplished. At the end of this period, when the rector of the house of the Society of Jesus was transferred, His Majesty brought here another very spiritual one who had great courage and understanding and a good background in studies,⁸ and at a time when I was in dire need. For since he who was my confessor had a superior, and members of the Society have this virtue to the extreme that they will not stir unless what they do is in conformity with their superior's will, he didn't dare, for sufficient reasons that he had, come to a decision about some things, although he understood my spirit well and desired that it make much progress. And now my spirit was moving with such great impulses of love that it felt very keenly its bondage; nevertheless, it didn't venture beyond what he commanded me.

8. One day, while I was greatly troubled with the thought that my confessor didn't believe me, the Lord told me not to be anxious, that that affliction would soon end. I rejoiced deeply, thinking His words meant I was soon to die; and I became very happy when I thought about it. Afterward, I saw clearly they referred to the arrival of this rector I mentioned because the occasion for that pain never presented itself again. The new rector didn't restrain my confessor, but rather told him to console me; that there was no reason for fear, and not to lead me by so confining a path; that he should let the spirit of the Lord work, for at times it seemed with these great spiritual impulses that my soul couldn't even breathe.

9. This new rector came to see me. My confessor ordered me to speak to him in all freedom and clarity. I usually felt the greatest aversion toward speaking about myself. Thus it happened that when I entered the confessional, I felt in my spirit I don't know what that I never recall having felt with anyone, neither before nor afterward; nor would I be able to describe what this experience was, or draw any comparisons. For it was a spiritual joy and understanding within my soul that his soul would understand mine and that mine would be in harmony with his; although, as I say, I don't know how such an experience was possible. For if I had spoken with him or had heard enthusiastic reports about him, it wouldn't have been a great thing

to experience joy in knowing he would understand me. But he hadn't spoken one word to me, nor I any to him, nor was he anyone of whom I had any previous knowledge. Afterward I saw that my spirit was not deceived, for in every way it did me and my soul great good to speak with him. His attitude is very suited to persons whom it seems the Lord has already brought very far along, for he makes them run rather than walk with measured step. His method is to detach them from everything and to mortify them, for the Lord has given him the most remarkable talent for doing this, as well as for many other things.

10. At the time of my initial conversations with him I immediately understood his style and saw that his soul was a pure and holy one and that he had a special gift from the Lord for discerning spirits. He consoled me very much. A little while after I had got to know him, the Lord began again to urge me to take up once more the matter of the monastery and to give my confessor and this rector many reasons and arguments why they shouldn't impede me from the work. Some of these reasons made them fear because this Father Rector never doubted the project was from the spirit of God, for through much study and care he considered all the consequences. After much reflection they didn't dare venture to hinder me from carrying out this work.

11. My confessor gave me permission again to dedicate myself entirely to this foundation. I saw clearly the toil it would bring upon me since I was very much alone and had hardly any means. We agreed to carry on in total secrecy, and so I got one of my sisters⁹ who lived outside this city to buy the house and fix it up, as though it were for herself, with money the Lord provided, in certain ways, for its purchase. It would take long to recount how the Lord was looking after it, for I took great care not to do anything against obedience. But I knew that if I said anything to my superiors, everything would be lost as happened the previous time, and things would even be worse. In procuring the money, acquiring the house, signing the contract for it, and fixing it up, I went through so many trials of so many kinds that now I'm amazed I was able to suffer them. In some of them I was completely alone; although my companion did what she could. But she could do little, and so little that it almost amounted

to nothing more than to have everything done in her name and as her gift and all the rest of the trouble was mine. Sometimes in distress I said: "My Lord, how is it You command things that seem impossible? For if I were at least free, even though I am a woman! But bound on so many sides, without money or the means to raise it or to obtain the brief or anything, what can I do, Lord?"

12. Once when in need, for I didn't know what to do or how to pay some workmen, St. Joseph, my true father and lord, appeared to me and revealed to me that I would not be lacking, that I should hire them. And so I did, without so much as a penny, and the Lord in ways that amazed those who heard about it provided for me.¹⁰ The house struck me as being very small; so small that it didn't seem to be adequate for a monastery, and I wanted to buy another house next to it, which was also small, to serve as the church. I had no means or way of buying this nor did I know what to do. And one day after Communion, the Lord said to me: "I've already told you¹¹ to enter as best you can." And by way of exclamation He added: "Oh, covetousness of the human race, that you think you will be lacking even ground! How many times did I sleep in the open because I had no place else!" I was astonished and saw that He was right. I went to the little house and drew up plans and found that although small it was perfect for a monastery, and I didn't bother about buying more property. But I arranged to have it fixed up so that it could be lived in—with everything left rough and unpolished—and likewise so that it would not be harmful to health. And this is the way these things should be done always.

13. On her feastday,¹² while I was going to Communion, St. Clare appeared to me with striking beauty. She told me to take courage and to continue on with what I had begun, that she would help me. I became very devoted to her; and what she said has indeed come true, for a nearby monastery of nuns of her order helps sustain us.¹³ What is more important is that little by little she brought this desire of mine to such perfection that the poverty the blessed saint practiced in her house is practiced in this one, and we are living on alms. For it had cost me no small amount of trouble that this observance of poverty would

have all the backing and authority of the Holy Father behind it so that no one could change it and that there never be any income. And the Lord does more, and it must perhaps be through the prayers of this blessed saint, for without any request His Majesty fully provides what is necessary for us. May He be blessed forever, amen.

14. On one of these same days, the feast of the Assumption of our Lady while at a monastery of the order of the glorious St. Dominic,¹⁴ I was reflecting upon the many sins I had in the past confessed in that house and many things about my wretched life. A rapture came upon me so great that it almost took me out of myself. I sat down; it still seems to me I couldn't see the elevation or hear Mass, and afterward I had a scruple about this. It seemed to me while in this state that I saw myself vested in a white robe of shining brightness, but at first I didn't see who was clothing me in it. Afterward I saw our Lady at my right side and my father St. Joseph at the left, for they were putting that robe on me. I was given to understand that I was now cleansed of my sins. After being clothed and while experiencing the most marvelous delight and glory, it seemed to me then that our Lady took me by the hands. She told me I made her very happy in serving the glorious St. Joseph, that I should believe that what I was striving for in regard to the monastery would be accomplished, that the Lord and those two would be greatly served in it, that I shouldn't fear there would ever be any failure in this matter even though the obedience which was to be given was not to my liking, because they would watch over us, and that her Son had already promised us He would be with us, that as a sign that this was true she was giving me a jewel. It seemed to me she placed around my neck a very beautiful golden necklace to which was attached a highly valuable cross. This gold and these stones are incomparably different from earthly ones. Their beauty is very different from what is imaginable here below. And the intellect cannot attain to an understanding of the nature of the robe that the Lord desires to have represented, nor can one imagine its whiteness; everything here on earth in comparison is like a sketch made from soot, so to speak.

15. The beauty I saw in our Lady was extraordinary, although

I didn't make out any particular details except the form of her face in general and that her garment was of the most brilliant white, not dazzling but soft. I didn't see the glorious St. Joseph so clearly, although I saw indeed that he was there, as in the visions I mentioned that are not seen.¹⁵ Our Lady seemed to me to be a very young girl. They were with me a little while; and I was in a state of wonderful glory and happiness, which in my opinion I had never experienced and which I did not want to see come to an end; then it seemed to me I saw them ascend to heaven with a great multitude of angels. I was left in deep loneliness, although so consoled and elevated and recollected in prayer and moved to love that I remained some time without being able to stir or speak, but almost outside myself. I was left with a great impulse to be dissolved for God and with similar effects. And everything happened in such a way that I could never doubt, no matter how much I tried, that the vision was from God. It left me very comforted and with great peace.

16. As for what the Queen of Angels said concerning obedience,¹⁶ it pertained to the fact that it distressed me not to give obedience to the order, but the Lord had told me it wasn't suitable to give it to my superiors. He gave me the reasons why it would in no way be fitting that I do so. But He told me I should petition Rome in a certain way, which He also indicated to me, and that He would take care that we get our request. And so it came about, for the petition was made the way the Lord told me and it was granted easily, whereas we had been unable to obtain it. Because of some things that happened afterward it was very fortunate the obedience was given to the bishop. But at that time I wasn't acquainted with the prelate, nor did I know who he would be. The Lord willed that he be an excellent one and that he be strongly in favor of this house, as was necessary because of the great opposition there was to it, as I shall say afterward,¹⁷ and in order that it be established in its present state. May He be blessed who in this way did everything, amen.

Chapter 34

Discusses how at this time it was opportune for her to leave the city. Tells about the reason and how her superior ordered her to go to console a lady of the nobility who was very distressed. Begins to deal with what happened there and the great favor the Lord granted her in making her the means by which He awakened a very eminent person to serve Him wholeheartedly, and how afterward she had this person's support and favor. The chapter is most important.

WELL NO MATTER HOW CAREFUL I was that this work be secret, I couldn't keep it all so hidden that there wouldn't be those persons who would find out about it; some believed what they heard, others didn't. I feared a great deal that if someone should tell the provincial when he came, he would order me not to continue; and immediately the whole thing would have to stop. The Lord provided in this way. It happened that in a large city, more than twenty leagues from here, a lady was very grieved because of the death of her husband. Her distress had reached such an extreme that they feared for her health.¹ She had heard news about this little sinner, for the Lord had so arranged matters that for the sake of other blessings that would follow they spoke highly to her about me. This lady was well acquainted with the provincial, and since she was a person of the nobility and knew I was in a monastery where the nuns were allowed to go out, the Lord gave her a strong, irresistible desire to see me; she thought I would be able to console her. She immediately tried by every means she could to bring me there, and to this effect sent a message to the provincial who was far away. He sent me an order, under precept of obedience, to go immediately with another companion. I learned of it on Christmas eve.²

2. It caused me some disturbance and a lot of affliction to know that she wanted to bring me there because she thought there was some good in me, for since I knew I was so wretched I couldn't bear such a thought. Praying to God very earnestly about this, I spent all of Matins, or a great part of it, in a deep rapture. The Lord told me to go and not listen to opinions, because few

would counsel me prudently; that even though I would have trials, God would be greatly served; that for the business concerning the monastery it was fitting I be absent until the brief arrive because the devil had set up a cunning plot for when the provincial would return; that I shouldn't fear anything; that He would help me there. I was very much strengthened and consoled. I told the rector about it. He told me I should by no means fail to go. For others told me that I shouldn't abide by the provincial's letter, that it was the invention of the devil so that some harm could come to me there; that I should write back to the provincial.

3. I obeyed the rector, and with what I had learned in prayer I went without fear, although not without sheer embarrassment in considering the title under which they were bringing me there and how much they were being deceived. This made me beg the Lord more that He not abandon me. I was very consoled that there was a house of the Society of Jesus in that city where I was going³ and that by submitting to their orders as I did here I would, I thought, have some security. It pleased the Lord that that lady was so comforted she soon began to improve noticeably, and each day she found herself more at ease. She valued this improvement highly because, as I said,⁴ the suffering had weighed on her heavily. And the Lord must have done this through the many prayers good persons I knew offered in order that things would turn out well for me. She was very God-fearing and so good that her abundant Christian spirit supplied for what was lacking in me. She grew deeply fond of me. I esteemed her very much in observing her goodness. But almost everything was a cross for me because the comforts caused me great torment, and I was very fearful about the big fuss made over me. My soul was so dispirited I didn't dare grow negligent, nor did the Lord neglect me; while I was there He granted me the most wonderful favors. These gave me such freedom and made me so despise all that I saw—and the greater the favors, the greater the contempt—that I conversed with those noble ladies, whom it would have been an honor for me to serve, with the freedom I would have felt had I been their equal.

4. I derived a very beneficial insight, and I told her about

it. I realized that she was a woman and as subject to passions and weaknesses as I, and how little should be our esteem for the status of nobility, and that the greater the nobility the more the cares and trials. I observed the solicitude they had for preserving their composure in conformity with this status, which doesn't allow them to live, obliging them to eat without rhyme or reason because everything must be done in accordance with their status and not with their bodily constitution. (They have often to eat food that is more in harmony with their position than with their liking.) As a result I totally abhorred any desire to become a lady of the nobility—God deliver me from faulty composure!—even though I believe there are few women more humble or of greater simplicity than this lady who is one of the most noble in the kingdom. I pitied her and felt it when I saw how often she had to go against her inclination in order to fulfill the duties of her state. As for the servants, what they can be trusted with amounts to little, even though she had good ones. You dare not speak to one more than to the other, or else the one you favor will be disliked by the others. This is a kind of subservience that makes calling such persons “lords” one of the world's lies, for it doesn't seem to me they are anything but slaves to a thousand things.

5. The Lord was pleased that while I stayed at that house the persons who lived in it improved in their service of His Majesty, although I wasn't free of some trials and some envy on the part of a few because of the great love that lady had for me. They perhaps must have thought I was aiming after some personal advantage. The Lord most probably allowed them to provide me with some trials and similar things as well as other things of another kind so that I wouldn't be charmed by the comfort I likewise experienced, and He was pleased to draw me out of it all with improvement for my soul.

6. While I was there it happened that a certain religious came to that city, a person from the nobility with whom I had sometimes conversed many years previously.⁵ Once, when attending Mass at a monastery of his order near the place where I was staying, there came over me a desire to know the condition of his soul since I wanted him to be a great servant of God; and

I rose to go to speak to him. Since I was already recollected in prayer, it seemed to me after I got up that it was a waste of time, and I wondered why I should meddle, and returned to my seat. It seems to me that this happened three times, and finally, the good angel was more powerful than the bad; I went to call him, and he came to speak with me in the confessional. We began to question each other—for it was many years since we had met—about our lives. I began to tell him I had experienced many trials of soul. He strongly urged me to tell him what the trials were. I told him they were not meant to be known nor was it meant that I should speak of them. He said that since the Dominican Father I mentioned—⁶who was a great friend of his—knew about them he would find out from him and that I shouldn't worry about it.

7. The fact is that neither was it in his power to stop pressing me nor was it in mine, it seems to me, to resist speaking about them. For despite all the displeasures and shame I usually felt when I spoke about these things, I didn't feel any pain with him or with the rector I mentioned;⁷ rather, I was very much consoled. I told him about them under the seal of confession. He seemed to me wiser than ever, although I always thought he had a great mind. I considered the wonderful talents and gifts he had for doing much good, were he to give himself totally to God. I've experienced this for some years: as soon as I see a person who greatly pleases me, with longings I sometimes cannot bear, I want to see him give himself totally to God. And although I desire that all serve God, the longings come with very great impulses in the case of these persons I like; so I beg the Lord very much on their behalf. With the religious I'm speaking of, it so happened to me.

8. He asked me to pray earnestly to God for him, but he had no need to ask since I was already of such a mind that I couldn't have done otherwise. I went to the place where I usually prayed alone and, being deeply recollected, began to talk to the Lord in a foolish way, which I often do without knowing what I'm saying. It is love that is then speaking, and the soul is so transported that I don't notice the difference there is between it and God. Love that knows it possesses His Majesty forgets

the soul and thinks it is in Him and, as one without division, speaks absurdities. I recall that after having begged Him with many tears for that soul, that it be truly committed to His service, I said that even though I considered him good this didn't satisfy me, since I wanted him to be very good; and so I said to His Majesty: "Lord, You must not deny me this favor; see how this individual is fit to be our friend."

9. O goodness and great humanity of God! You don't look at the words but at the desires and the will with which they are spoken! How do You bear that one like myself should speak so boldly to Your Majesty! May You be blessed forever and ever.

10. I recall that in those hours of prayer that night there came over me a great affliction in wondering whether I was at enmity with God. Since I couldn't know whether I was in grace or not (not that I wanted to know, but that I desired to die so as not to find myself in a life where I wasn't sure whether or not I was dead—for there couldn't have been a more grievous death for me than to wonder whether I had offended God), this pain oppressed me. All overflowing and dissolved in tears, I begged God not to permit me to be without grace. Then I understood that I could truly be consoled and certain that I was in grace because a love of God like this, and those favors and sentiments His Majesty gave me, could not exist harmoniously with a soul in mortal sin. I remained confident the Lord would grant what I begged of Him for this person. He told me some words to tell him. I greatly disliked doing this because I didn't know how to say them. This matter of giving a message to a third party, as I said,⁸ is what I always dislike most; especially in this case since I didn't know how the person would take it, or if he would make fun of me. I got very distressed about it. Finally, I became so persuaded that I believe I promised God I wouldn't fail to tell this person; because of my great embarrassment, I put the words in writing and gave them to him.

11. They indeed seemed to be from God on account of the effect they had upon him. He resolved very sincerely to dedicate himself to prayer, even though he didn't do so at once. Since the Lord had wanted this person for Himself, He sent him some truths by means of me, which, without my understanding them,

were so apropos that they amazed him. And the Lord must have disposed him to believe they were from His Majesty. I, although wretched, begged the Lord intensely to convert this individual to Himself completely, and to make him abhor the satisfactions and things of life. Consequently — may God be praised forever! — he turned to God so completely that every time he speaks to me, I'm stupefied. If I hadn't seen it, I would have doubted that in such a short time the favors would have so increased and he would have been so occupied with God that he no longer seemed to live for anything else on earth. May His Majesty protect him, for if he continues to advance like this (which I hope in the Lord he will since he is well grounded in self-knowledge), he will become one of God's most distinguished servants for the great benefit of many souls. Within a short time he has had much experience in spiritual things; these are gifts God gives when he desires and how He desires, and they depend neither on time nor on services. I do not mean that time and services are not important, but often the contemplation the Lord doesn't give to one in twenty years He gives to another in one. His Majesty knows the reason. This is a mistake we make: we think that with years we shall come to understand what in no way can be comprehended without experience. And so many are wrong, as I said,⁹ in wanting to discern spirits without having experience. I don't say that anyone who has not had spiritual experience, provided he is a learned man, should not guide someone who has. But he ought to limit himself to seeing to it that in both exterior and interior matters the soul walks in conformity to the natural way through the use of reason; and in supernatural experiences he should see that it walks in conformity with Sacred Scripture. As for the rest he shouldn't kill himself or think he understands what he doesn't, or suppress the spirit;¹⁰ for now, in respect to the spirit, another greater Lord governs them; they are not without a Superior.

12. Let him not be surprised or think these things are impossible — everything is possible with the Lord — but strive to strengthen his own faith and humble himself in that the Lord makes a little old woman wiser, perhaps, in this science than he is, even though he is a very learned man. With his humility

he will do more good for souls and for himself than by becoming a contemplative without it. For I repeat that if he doesn't have experience and a very great deal of humility in knowing that he doesn't understand the experience, but that it's not impossible on that account, he will be of little profit to himself and of still less profit to those with whom he deals. If he's humble, he shouldn't fear that the Lord will allow either of them to be deceived.

13. The Lord gave humility in many things to this Dominican Father of whom I'm speaking. As a result this Father strove to learn through study everything he could in this matter, for he is a good scholar. And what he doesn't know through experience he finds out from one who has it. Thus the Lord helps him by giving him deep faith, and so this Father has himself profited very much and has helped other souls; and mine is one of them. It seems that, since His Majesty was about to call to Himself some who were guiding me,¹¹ He provided that there be others to help me through difficult troubles and do me great good. The Lord changed him almost completely, in such a way that he hardly knew himself, so to speak; and the Lord gave him bodily strength for penance (which he didn't have before, but was sickly), and courage for everything good, and other things. It indeed seems to have been a very particular call from the Lord. May He be blessed forever.

14. I believe all the good comes to this Father from the favors the Lord granted him in prayer, for this good is not counterfeit. Already in some things the Lord has desired that he be tried, and he has come out of these trials as one who has already learned about the merit gained in suffering persecutions. I hope in the greatness of the Lord that through him much good will come to some persons of his order and to the order itself. This is already beginning to be known. I have seen great visions, and the Lord has told me some highly admirable things about him and about the rector of the Society of Jesus, whom I mentioned,¹² and about two other religious of the order of St. Dominic—especially about one of them,¹³ for His Majesty has already made known in deed some things having to do with his progress that I had known previously. But of the one of whom I'm now speaking

many things have been manifested to me.

15. Now I want to say one thing here: I was once with him in a parlor and my soul and spirit came to such an understanding of the great love of God that burned in his spirit that this knowledge almost absorbed me, for I was considering the grandeur of God who in so short a time had raised a soul to such a high state. It made me very embarrassed because I saw him listening with so much humility to some things I was saying about prayer and saw that I had little of it to be speaking in such a way with a person like this. The Lord must have suffered it because of the strong desire I had to see this person far advanced. It benefited me so much to be with him that it seems he left my soul fired anew with the desire to serve the Lord from the beginning. O my Jesus, what a soul inflamed in Your love accomplishes! How highly we must esteem such a soul and how we must beg the Lord to let it remain in this life! Whoever has this same love must follow after these souls if possible.

16. It is a wonderful thing when a sick person finds another wounded with that same sickness; how great the consolation to find you are not alone. The two become a powerful help to each other in suffering and meriting. What excellent backing they give to one another since they are determined to risk a thousand lives for God and they desire the opportunities for losing them. They are like soldiers who want to make war in order to capture the spoils and become rich; they have understood that such riches cannot be acquired any other way. This is their duty: to labor. Oh, what a great thing it is when the Lord gives this light to understand the abundance that is gained in suffering for Him! This isn't well understood until one abandons all for Him. For those who rest in something show that they esteem it; surely if they esteem it they will be sorry to give it up—and already everything is going imperfectly and astray. The saying fits well here that the lost go after what is lost. And what greater perdition, greater blindness, greater misfortune than to cherish that which is nothing?

17. Well, to return to what I was saying,¹⁴ while with the deepest joy I was contemplating that soul, it seems the Lord wanted me to see clearly the treasures He had placed in it. See-

ing the favor He granted me in that He used me as a means—though I found myself unworthy to be such—I had higher esteem for the favors the Lord granted this soul and considered them more my own than if they had been given to me. I praised His Majesty upon seeing that He was fulfilling my desires and had heard my prayer, which was that the Lord awaken persons like these. My soul being then in such a state that it couldn't bear so much joy, it went out of itself and was lost, so the more to gain. The reflections were forgotten, and while I was hearing that divine language in which it seems the Holy Spirit was speaking, a powerful rapture came over me which almost made me lose my senses, although it lasted only a short while. I saw Christ with awesome majesty and glory showing great happiness over what was taking place. Thus He told me and wanted me to see clearly that He was always present in conversations like these and how much He is pleased when persons so delight in speaking of Him.

At another time, I saw this Father, when he was away from this place, raised up by angels in great glory.¹⁵ Through this vision I understood that his soul was making much progress. Thus it happened that serious testimony against his honor was given by a person for whom he had done much good by providing a remedy for this person's soul and own loss of honor. He underwent this with great happiness, performed other works of much service to God, and suffered other persecutions.

18. It doesn't seem to me fitting now to describe anything more. If afterward, since you know about these things,¹⁶ your Reverence should think it is indeed appropriate, they can be put down for the glory of the Lord. What I said about the prophecies concerning this house, and other prophecies I shall mention, as well as other things, were all fulfilled. Some the Lord told me three years before they came about—others more than three, others less. I always told them to my confessor and to this widow friend of mine whom I had permission to tell, as I said.¹⁷ I have known that she has told them to other persons, and these persons know I am not lying; nor may God ever permit me to lie, for in no instance would I speak anything but the complete truth—and how much more in matters so serious.

19. When a brother-in-law of mine died suddenly¹⁸ and I was deeply grieved because he hadn't had the chance to go to confession, it was told to me in prayer that my sister would die this way, that I should go to her and try to get her to prepare herself for such an event. I told my confessor and since he didn't allow me to go, I heard the message at other times. When he learned of this, he told me to go there, and that there was nothing to lose. She lived in a small village;¹⁹ I went and, without telling her about the locution, enlightened her as I could about everything and got her to confess very frequently and in all events to take care of her soul. She was very good and she did so. Within four or five days after she had gained this habit and become very conscientious, she died without seeing anyone or being able to confess. Happily, since she had acquired the habit, little more than eight days had passed since she had gone to confession. News of her death brought me great joy. She remained a very short while in purgatory. I don't think more than eight days passed when the Lord appeared to me after I received Communion and wanted me to see how He brought her to glory. In all those years from the time He told me until she died, I didn't forget what had been made known to me, nor did my companion; as soon as my sister died, my companion came to me very much amazed to see how the revelation had been fulfilled. May God be praised forever who takes such care of souls so that they be not lost.

Chapter 35

Continues on the same subject: the foundation of this house of our glorious father St. Joseph. Tells of the means the Lord provided by which holy poverty would be observed in it, the reason why she left the lady she was staying with and returned, and of some other things that happened to her.

WELL, WHILE I WAS WITH this lady I mentioned,¹ with whom I stayed more than a half year, the Lord ordained that a *beata*² of our order who lived more than seventy leagues from here should find out about me. She decided to come

here, making a detour of several leagues, to speak to me. The Lord had inspired her the same year and month He did me to found another monastery of this order. As soon as He gave her this desire, she sold all that she had and walked to Rome barefoot to get a patent for it.

2. She is a woman who practices much penance and prayer; the Lord has granted her many favors, and our blessed Lady appeared to her and ordered her to make the foundation. She was so far ahead of me in serving the Lord that I was ashamed to stand in her presence. She showed me the patent letters she brought from Rome, and during the fifteen days she stayed with me we arranged how we should go about founding these monasteries. Until I had spoken to her, it hadn't been brought to my notice that our rule—before it was mitigated—ordered that we own nothing,³ nor had I been about to found the house without an income. My intention had been that we have no worries about our needs; I hadn't considered the many cares ownership of property brings with it. Since the Lord had taught her, this holy woman understood well, without knowing how to read, what I, after having read over our constitutions so often, didn't know. As she told me about it, it seemed to me to be right, although I feared they wouldn't allow me, but say I was doing something foolish and that I shouldn't do a thing that would make others suffer on my account. Had I been alone it wouldn't have held me back either little or much; rather, it would have been a great pleasure for me to think I was keeping the counsels of Christ, our Lord, since His Majesty had already given me great desires for poverty. Thus I didn't doubt that poverty was the best thing for me, because for a long time I had been desiring that it would be possible for me to go begging for love of God and not have a house or anything. But I feared that if the Lord didn't give the others these desires, their lives would be unhappy. I also feared that poverty would be the cause of some distraction since I observed certain poor monasteries in which there wasn't much recollection. I failed to reflect that this lack of recollection was the cause of their being poor and that it was not the practice of poverty that caused their distraction. For distraction won't make monasteries richer; nor does God ever fail anyone who

serves Him. In sum, I had weak faith, which was not true of this servant of God.

3. Since I consulted in all things with so many, I nonetheless found almost no one with this opinion, neither my confessor nor the learned men with whom I dealt. They brought out so many reasons against poverty that I didn't know what to do. Since I knew it was in the rule and saw that observing poverty would be more perfect, I couldn't persuade myself that the monastery should have an income. And if sometimes they had me convinced, when I returned to prayer and contemplating Christ on the cross, so poor and so naked, I couldn't patiently accept the idea of being rich. I tearfully begged Him to ordain things so that I would see myself poor, as He was.

4. I found so many disadvantages in having an income and saw it would be so great a cause of disquiet and even distraction that I did nothing else but dispute with learned men. I wrote about it to the Dominican religious⁴ who was helping us. He sent me two pages with objections and theology written on both sides on why I shouldn't do it, and he also told me he had studied the matter very carefully. I answered him that I didn't want to benefit from theology if it wasn't conducive to my following my vocation, my vow of poverty, and the counsels of Christ with total perfection, and that in this case he did me no favor with his learning. If I found some person who would help me, I became very happy. That lady with whom I was staying⁵ was a great help to me in this matter. Some told me in the beginning that the idea seemed to them good; afterward, as they began to reflect about it, they found so many disadvantages that they returned to insist on my not carrying it out. I told them that, since they were so quick to change their opinion, I preferred to follow the first.

5. At this time, since this lady hadn't seen the holy Friar Peter of Alcántara, the Lord was pleased through my entreaties that he come to her house. Because he was a true lover of poverty and had practiced it for so many years, he knew well the riches that lay within it; so he helped me a great deal and ordered that I should by no means fail to go through with my plan.⁶ With this favorable opinion from one who could give the best opinion

since he had known about poverty through wide experience, I made up my mind not to go looking for other opinions.

6. One day while praying intensely to God about this matter, the Lord told me I shouldn't in any way fail to found the monastery in poverty, that this was both the will of His Father and His own, that He would help me. This took place during a deep rapture with so many remarkable effects that I couldn't have any doubt the desire was from God.

Another time He told me an income would cause disturbance of mind, and added other things in favor of poverty, assuring me that whoever would observe it would not lack the necessities of life; this lack, as I say, I never feared for myself. The Lord also changed the heart of the *presentado*,⁷ I mean of the Dominican I mentioned who had written to me that I shouldn't found the monastery without income. I was very happy to hear this then and to have these opinions. It seemed to me I possessed all the world's riches in resolving to live by the love of God.

7. At this time, since there was going to be an election in my monastery, my provincial⁸ lifted his command and the obedience he had placed me under to stay with this lady, and he left it up to me to choose whether to return or to remain with her for awhile. Some sent me the news that many wanted to give me the charge of being superior. Merely to think of such a thing was a terrible torment. Whereas I was determined to suffer easily any martyrdom for God, by no artifice could I persuade myself to suffer this one. Besides the great amount of work (there were many nuns)⁹ and other reasons for which I never liked the thought of having any office, it seemed to me that being superior would be very dangerous for my conscience; so I praised God I wasn't there. I wrote to my friends not to vote for me.

8. While I was very happy that I wasn't in the midst of all that clatter, the Lord told me I should by no means fail to go, that since I desired the cross a good one was ready for me, that I shouldn't reject it, that I ought to go with courage, that He would help me, and that I must go right away. I became very disturbed and didn't do anything but weep, for I thought the cross meant I would be elected superior; and, as I say, I couldn't be persuaded that such an office would be any good for my

soul — nor did I find in myself the qualifications. I gave an account of all to my confessor. He told me I should thus try to go, that it would be clearly the more perfect thing to do, and that since it was very hot it would be sufficient for me to be there for the election, and that I could wait some days before going so as not to get sick from the journey. But the Lord had ordained otherwise, and so things came about.

Interiorly I was extremely restless, and I couldn't practice prayer. It seemed to me I was failing to do what the Lord had commanded me and that, since I was in that place to my own liking and pleasure, I didn't want to go to offer myself to the trial; that I was all words with God and that, since I could be there where it would be more perfect for me to be, I had to ask why I was failing to go; that if I should die, I should die! Along with all this went a constriction of soul, and the Lord took away all satisfaction in prayer. In sum, I was in such a state and so severely tormented that I asked that lady to be good enough to let me go. Already my confessor — since he saw me in this state — had told me to go, for God likewise moved him as He did me.

9. She so regretted my leaving her that her sorrow was another torment for me. It had cost her very much, many kinds of urgent pleas, to get permission from the provincial to have me with her. Thus it was a most difficult thing for her to let me go, and she felt it keenly. But since she was very God-fearing and I told her, in addition to many other things, that my going could render God great service, and I gave her the hope it would be possible for me to return to see her, she accepted the fact of my leaving — although regretfully.

10. I no longer was sorry to go; once I understood it was something more perfect and that it would render greater service to God, by means of the happiness it gives me to please Him, I was able to endure the pain of leaving that lady who I saw felt the separation so deeply and other persons whom I owed a great deal, especially my confessor, who was from the Society of Jesus,¹⁰ and with whom I got along very well. But the more I saw I was losing consolation for the Lord's sake, the happier I became at losing it. I couldn't understand how this was possible, because I saw clearly these two contraries: my being

pleased and consoled and happy over what weighed upon my soul. For I had been consoled and at peace there and had found time for many hours of prayer. I saw I was about to place myself in a fire, for the Lord had already told me¹¹ I was going to undergo a great cross, although I never thought it would be as great as I afterward found out it was. Nonetheless, I was happy in going; and since the Lord had desired me to go, I was disturbed that I hadn't entered the battle immediately. Thus His Majesty sent strength and placed it in the midst of my weakness.

11. I wasn't able, as I say, to understand how these contraries were possible. I thought of this comparison: Were I to possess a jewel, or something else that gave me great happiness, and then to find out that one whom I loved and wanted to please more than myself desired that object, my happiness in going without it would be greater than in possessing it if I made that other person happy. And because the happiness in pleasing the other would surpass my first happiness, it would take away any pain I might feel in the lack of the jewel, or of the thing cherished, or in losing the happiness it gave me. Thus, though I wanted to feel distress upon seeing that I was leaving persons from whom I so much regretted being separated (and I am by nature so grateful that at another time this would have been enough to cause me deep affliction), now, even though I wanted to feel it, I couldn't.

12. It was so important, as regards the business of this holy house, for me not to have delayed a day longer that I don't know how I might have brought things to a conclusion if I had then stayed on there. O greatness of God! Often I am amazed when I consider how particularly His Majesty wanted to help me found this little dwelling corner for God. I believe this is what it is; it is an abode in which His Majesty delights, for He once said to me while I was in prayer that this house¹² was a paradise of delight for Him. And thus it seems His Majesty has selected the souls He has brought to this monastery. I live in their company very, very much ashamed. I wouldn't have known how to desire for this purpose souls such as these; so austere, poor, and prayerful. And they bear this austerity with a joy and happiness that makes each one feel unworthy to have deserved to come to a

place like this. There are some, especially, whom the Lord called out of a world of much vanity and ostentation where they could have been satisfied in conformity with its laws. And the Lord has so doubled their joys in this house that they realized clearly He has given them a hundred joys for every one they left.¹³ And they can't get enough of thanking His Majesty. With others, He has changed what was good into something better. To those who are young He gives fortitude and knowledge so that they are unable to desire anything else, and they understand that to be detached from all the things of life is to live in the greatest calm, even in regard to earthly things. To those who are older and have poor health He gives strength, and He gives them the power to bear the austerity and penance the others do.

13. O my Lord, how obvious it is that You are almighty! There's no need to look for reasons for what You want. For, beyond all natural reason, You make things so possible that You manifest clearly there's no need for anything more than truly to love You and truly to leave all for You, so that You, my Lord, may make everything easy. It fits well here to say that You feign labor in Your law. For I don't see, Lord, nor do I know how the road that leads to You is narrow.¹⁴ I see that it is a royal road, not a path; a road that is safer for anyone who indeed takes it. Very far off are the occasions of sin, those narrow mountain passes and the rocks that make one fall. What I would call a path, a wretched path and a narrow way, is the kind which has on one side, where a soul can fall, a valley far below, and on the other side a precipice: as soon as one becomes careless one is hurled down and broken into pieces.

14. They who really love You, my Good, walk safely on a broad and royal road. They are far from the precipice. Hardly have they begun to stumble when You, Lord, give them Your hand. One fall is not sufficient for a person to be lost, nor are many, if they love You and not the things of the world. They journey in the valley of humility. I cannot understand what it is that makes people afraid of setting out on the road of perfection. May the Lord, because of who He is, give us understanding of how wretched is the security that lies in such manifest dangers as following the crowd and how true security lies in striving to

make progress on the road of God. Let them turn their eyes to Him and not fear the setting of this Sun of Justice, nor, if we don't first abandon Him, will He allow us to walk at night and go astray.

15. They aren't afraid to walk among lions (by which I mean whatever the world calls honors, delights, and similar pleasures) where it seems each lion would want to tear off a piece of them; and here on this road it seems the devil makes them afraid of field mice. A thousand times do I marvel and ten thousand times would I like to find satisfaction in bewailing and crying out to everyone my great blindness and wickedness so that doing this might help them open their eyes. May anyone who can, through God's goodness, open them; and may He not permit me to become blind, amen.

Chapter 36

Continues the same subject. Tells how this monastery of the glorious St. Joseph was finally founded and of the strong opposition and persecution the nuns had to undergo after taking the habit. Tells also of the great trials and temptations she suffered and how the Lord brought her out of them all victoriously to His own praise and glory.

ONCE I LEFT THAT CITY¹ I journeyed very happily, determined to undergo most willingly everything the Lord desired. The very night I reached this city our patent and our brief² for the monastery arrived from Rome. I was amazed, and, when they learned of the great need there was for my being here and of the coincidence the Lord had prepared for me, so too were those who knew how He made me come quickly. For I found here the bishop and the holy Friar Peter of Alcántara and another gentleman, a very good servant of God,³ in whose house this holy friar was staying; this gentleman was a person in whom the servants of God found protection as well as a welcome.

2. The two of them succeeded in getting the bishop to accept

the monastery under his jurisdiction,⁴ which was no small thing since the house was to be poor. But the bishop was so fond of persons whom he saw determined to serve the Lord that he soon grew fond of showing it his favor. And because this holy old Friar Peter approved it and urged now some, now others, to help us, it was he who did everything. If I hadn't by coincidence come at this precise time—as I already mentioned—I don't know how the monastery could have been founded. For this saintly man was here only a little while (I don't believe as many as eight days); he was very sick during them, and shortly afterward the Lord brought him to Himself.⁵ It seems His Majesty preserved him until this matter was taken care of because for a long time—I don't know if it exceeded two years—he was very sick.

3. Everything was done in deep secrecy; if it hadn't been, nothing could have been accomplished since the people were opposed to the foundation, as became manifest afterward. The Lord ordained that my brother-in-law⁶ become ill; since his wife was not here and he was in such need, my superiors gave me permission to stay with him. With this excuse nothing became known, although some persons didn't fail to suspect something; yet they didn't believe their suspicions. It was an amazing thing that he wasn't any sicker than was necessary for the business to be taken care of. When there was need that he get well so that I could be free and that he could leave the house empty, the Lord immediately brought this about; at which my brother-in-law marvelled.

4. I had a lot of trouble with some persons at times—and with others at other times—that the monastery be accepted. I had trouble with my sick brother-in-law and with the workmen to get them to convert the house into a monastery and make it ready quickly, for there was still much to be done. Moreover, my companion⁷ was not here; it seemed to us we could better conceal what we were doing if she were absent. For many reasons I was taking care that everything be done in a hurry; one of the reasons for this was that I feared by the hour they would make me return to my own monastery.⁸ There were so many trying things that I wondered if this wasn't the cross;⁹ although it still

seemed to me small in comparison with the great cross I learned from the Lord I would have to suffer.

5. When everything was ready the Lord was pleased that on St. Bartholomew's day the habit was received by some¹⁰ and the Blessed Sacrament was reserved, and with all due authority and power our monastery of our most glorious father St. Joseph was founded, in 1562. I, along with two other nuns from our house who happened to be outside,¹¹ was present at this clothing. Since this house that was converted into a monastery was the one in which my brother-in-law lived (for, as I said,¹² he was the one who bought it in order to keep the project a better secret), I was there with permission; and I hadn't done anything without getting advice from learned men so as not to go one iota against obedience. Since these learned men observed that for many reasons the monastery would be very beneficial for the whole order, they told me I could go ahead even though I did so secretly and was careful that my superiors not find out about it. If these learned men had told me an imperfection lay in what I was doing, no matter how small, I would have given up founding a thousand monasteries, how much more one. This is certain, for although I desired to withdraw more from everything and live my profession and vocation with greater perfection and enclosure, I desired this in such a way that if I had found out it would have been of greater service to the Lord to abandon the project, I would have done so with complete peace and calm, as I did the other time.¹³

6. Well, with me it was like being in glory to see the Blessed Sacrament reserved and that four poor orphans (for they didn't bring any dowry)¹⁴ and four great servants of God (for this is what I had in mind from the beginning, that persons would enter who by their example of prayer and a very perfect life would be a foundation upon which we could achieve our goal) would give each other support; and to see a work accomplished that I knew was for the service of the Lord and to the honor of the habit of His glorious Mother—for these were my concerns. It also consoled me to have done what the Lord had so often given me the command to do; that there was another church in this city, dedicated to my glorious father St. Joseph, in whose honor

none was yet built. But this consolation didn't come because it seemed to me that I myself did anything to bring about this new foundation. To me it never seemed that I did anything, nor does it now. I always know that the Lord did it, and what I did for my part I did with so many imperfections that I rather find there was a reason to blame myself than be pleased with myself. But it was a great delight for me to see that His Majesty had used me—who am so wretched—as an instrument for such a marvelous work. Thus I was so intensely happy that I was as though outside myself, in deep prayer.

7. After all was over and about three or four hours had passed, the devil stirred up within me a spiritual battle, as I shall now describe. He brought doubts to my mind about whether what I had done was wrong; whether I had gone against obedience in having made the foundation without my provincial's orders. For it indeed seemed to me the provincial would be somewhat displeased because the house was under the jurisdiction of the Ordinary and for my not having told him first; although, since he had not wanted to give permission and I myself had not changed my obedience, it also seemed to me that on the other hand he wouldn't care at all. And there were doubts as to whether those who lived here would be happy with so much austerity. What if they lacked food? Wasn't it all foolishness? Who got me involved in all this since I already had a monastery to live in? All that the Lord had commanded me, and the great deal of advice, and the prayers that for more than two years had gone on almost without cease, all was erased from my memory as though it had never been. I only remembered my own decisions. And all the virtues, and my faith, were then suspended within me without my having the strength to activate any of them or defend myself against so many blows.

8. The devil raised doubts in me also about how I wanted to shut myself up in so austere a house, and with my many illnesses. How would I be able to endure so much penance and leave a monastery that was large and pleasant and where I had always been so happy? And how could I leave so many friends, for perhaps those in the new house would not be to my liking? I had obligated myself to a great deal; perhaps I would despair.

The devil by chance may have intended to take away my peace and quiet so that on account of such disturbance I wouldn't be able to pray and thus would lose my soul.

Thoughts of this sort, all mixed together, he put before my mind; I was powerless to think of anything else. This state was accompanied by an affliction and obscurity and darkness of soul that I wouldn't know how to exaggerate. Finding myself in such a condition, I made a visit to the Blessed Sacrament; although I couldn't pray. It seems to me the anguish I experienced was like that of someone in the death agony. I didn't dare speak of it to anyone, for I still didn't have a designated confessor.

9. Oh, God help me, what a miserable life this is! There's no secure happiness, nor anything that doesn't change. A short time before it seemed to me I wouldn't change my happiness with anyone on earth, and now the very reason for this happiness tormented me in such a way that I didn't know what to do with myself. Oh, if we would carefully observe the affairs of our life! Each one would see through experience the little of either happiness or unhappiness we ought to have on their account.

Certainly, I think, it was one of the most difficult periods in my life. It seems my spirit anticipated the many things I had yet to pass through, although they weren't as severe as this suffering would have been should it have lasted. But the Lord did not let His poor servant suffer long, for never did He fail to succor me in my tribulations. And He did so in my present one, for He gave me a little light to enable me to see it was the devil and to understand the truth that it was all due to the devil's desire to frighten me with lies. As a result I began to recall my strong resolutions to serve the Lord and my desires to suffer for Him. I reflected that if I were to fulfill these desires I couldn't go about seeking rest; and that if I had trials, they would be meritorious; and if unhappiness, it would serve as purgatory if I accepted it in the service of God; that I had nothing to fear, for since I desired trials, these troubles were good; that the greater the opposition the greater the gain. And why did I lack courage to serve one whom I owed so much?

With these and other reflections, drawing up all my strength, I promised before the Blessed Sacrament to do all I could to

obtain permission to come to live in this house, and to make a promise of enclosure when able to do it in good conscience.

10. Once I did this the devil fled instantly and left me calm and happy; and I remained so, and have remained so always. All the enclosure and penance and other things that are observed in this house are extremely easy for me and amount to little. The happiness is so very great I sometimes wonder what I could choose on earth that would be more pleasant for me. I don't know if these observances are the reason for my having better health than ever, or whether the Lord—since it is necessary and right that I do as everyone else—wants to give me this consolation of being able to keep them, even though with difficulty. But all those persons who know about my illnesses marvel at this power. May He be blessed who gives all things and in whose power all things can be done!¹⁵

11. I was left truly exhausted from such a conflict, and I laughed to myself at the devil, for I saw clearly it was he. I believe the Lord permitted this conflict because I had never known what it was to be unhappy with being a nun (not for even a moment during the twenty-eight years or more that I was one), and that I might know the great favor He had thereby granted me and the torment He had freed me from; and also so that if I should meet someone who was unhappy I wouldn't be surprised but feel compassion for her and know how to console her.

Once this conflict was over, after dinner, I wanted to rest a little since I had hardly slept the whole night, nor had I been without work or worry some of the other nights; and all the days had been truly tiring. But since what was done became known in my monastery, and there arose in the city a great outcry for the reasons I mentioned,¹⁶ which seemed to bear some weight, the prioress¹⁷ sent me an order to return to my monastery at once. On seeing her orders I left my nuns, who were very saddened, and returned immediately. I saw clearly that many trials would be awaiting me, but since the house was already established, I didn't worry much. I prayed to the Lord to protect me and to my father St. Joseph to bring me to his house, and I offered God what I would have to undergo. I was very happy about the coming opportunity to suffer for Him and be able to

serve Him, for I believed they would immediately throw me into the prison cell. But I thought this would make me very happy since I wouldn't have to speak to anyone and would be able to rest a little in solitude, for which I had a real need because I was worn out from so much dealing with people.

12. When I arrived and gave an account to my prioress, she was somewhat placated. They sent everything to the provincial, and the case was left up to him. When he came, I went before him very happy to know I was suffering something for the Lord because in this case I didn't find I had committed any offense either against His Majesty or against the order. Rather, I was trying with all my strength to bring our order increase, and I would have eagerly died for it since my whole desire was that our order fulfill its mission perfectly. I recalled the judgment pronounced on Christ and saw how it amounted to nothing at all, I accused myself of the fault as one who was very much to blame,¹⁸ and this seemed true to anyone who didn't know all the reasons. After having received a serious reprimand, although not one as severe as the transgression deserved or in accordance with what many told the provincial, I didn't want to excuse myself; I had been determined about what I did. Rather, I begged to be pardoned and punished and that he not be vexed with me.

13. I saw clearly that in some matters they condemned me without any fault on my part, for they said I did it so as to be esteemed or to become famous and other similar things. But in other matters I knew plainly they were speaking the truth, in saying that I was worse than others, in asking how, since I hadn't kept the strict religious observance of that house, I thought I could keep it in another stricter one, and in asserting that I gave scandal to the people and was promoting novelties. None of what they said caused me any disturbance or grief, although I let on that it did so as not to give the impression I didn't take to heart what they said to me. Finally the provincial ordered me to go before the nuns and give my account, and I had to do it.

14. Since I felt interiorly calm and the Lord helped me, I gave my explanation in such a way that neither the provincial nor those who were present found anything to condemn me for.

Afterward I spoke to him more freely, and he was very satisfied and promised—if all went well—to give me permission to go there once the city quieted down, for the clamor throughout the whole city was vehement, as I shall now describe.

15. After two or three days some of the councilmen as well as the mayor and the city council gathered in a meeting and unanimously stated they could by no means give consent, that to do so would bring notable harm to the republic, and that the Blessed Sacrament should be removed and the foundation should not in any way be allowed to continue. They ordered a meeting of all religious orders to be carried out in such a way that each could give its opinion through two learned spokesmen. Some of the spokesmen were silent, others condemned the new foundation. Finally they concluded that it should be suppressed at once. Only one member, a *presentado* of the order of St. Dominic,¹⁰ although he was opposed (not to the monastery, but to its being poor), said it wasn't something that had to be suppressed, that the matter should be considered carefully, that there was time for this, that such a decision pertained to the bishop—or other things of this nature. What he said was very helpful for they were so furious that it was a wonder they didn't carry out their decision right away. What happened, finally, was that the foundation had to continue in existence, for the Lord was pleased with it; and all of them together could do little against His will. They gave their reasons and were rightfully zealous; so, without offending God, they made me suffer as well as all the persons who were in favor of it (for there were some in its favor); and these persons underwent much persecution.

16. The uproar among the people was such that they talked of nothing else, and they were all condemning me and appealing to the provincial and to my monastery. I felt no more pain over what they said about me than if they hadn't said it, yet I was fearful the new house would be suppressed. This caused me great disturbance, as did also the realization that the persons who helped me were losing their credibility and suffering great trial; for what others said against me, I think, made me rejoice. If I had had a little faith, I wouldn't have experienced any disturbance; but a certain lack in one of the virtues is enough to put

them all to sleep. So, I was very afflicted for the two days in which these meetings, I mentioned, among the people took place. And while I was feeling really desolate, the Lord said to me: “Don’t you know that I am mighty? What do you fear?” And He assured me the new monastery would not be suppressed. As a result I was left very consoled. They sent an official denunciation to the royal council. The reply that came asked for an account of how the new monastery was founded.

17. As a result a long lawsuit began; the city sent its delegates to the royal council, and some persons had to go to represent the new monastery. But I had no money, nor did I know what to do. The Lord so provided that my provincial never ordered me to give up my involvement in the project. The provincial is so well disposed to everything virtuous that, even though he gave no actual help, he didn’t want to oppose the foundation. He didn’t give me permission to come here until he saw what the outcome of the lawsuit would be. These servants of God were alone; and they did more through their prayers than I did through my negotiations, although these negotiations required much effort.

Sometimes it seemed that everything was failing, especially one day before the provincial came when the prioress gave me the order not to have anything more to do with the new monastery; this meant abandoning everything. I went to God and told Him: “Lord, this house is not mine; it was founded for You; now that there is no one to take care of its affairs, You, Your Majesty, must do so.” I remained as at ease and undisturbed as I would have if the whole world had been taking care of the business for me, and I immediately felt it was in safe hands.

18. A very good servant of God, a priest,²⁰ who always helped me and was eager about everything regarding perfection, went to the royal council to take part in the negotiations and worked very hard. And that saintly gentlemen, whom I mentioned,²¹ did a great deal in this matter and helped in every way. He suffered a lot of trials and persecution, and always in everything I esteemed him as a father and still do now. The Lord gave so much fervor to those who helped us that each one considered the matter to be as much a part of them as it would if

their life and honor depended on it, and they didn't think of it as anything else than something by which the Lord was served. It seemed clear that His Majesty helped the master I mentioned,²² that cleric who was also one of those who helped me a great deal and whom the bishop made his representative in a large meeting that was held. He stood alone against everyone and finally appeased them by suggesting certain procedures through which time was gained; but none of the procedures was sufficient to keep them from soon returning to the question of suppressing the foundation as though its suppression were a matter of life and death, as the saying goes. This servant of God I'm speaking of officiated at the clothing ceremony and reserved the Blessed Sacrament in the new monastery; he was the victim of much persecution. This assault lasted almost half a year; to tell in detail the great trials they suffered would take a long time.

19. I was startled by what the devil stirred up against a few poor little women and how everyone thought—I mean those opposed—that this house would be so harmful to the city. There were only twelve women and the prioress (for there were to be no more); and they were living such a strict life. If the house were harmful or a mistake, it would be so for these women; but that it would be harmful to the city didn't make sense. But the adversaries found so many reasons for opposing it that they did so in good conscience. Finally they came to agree that if it had an income they would pass over the matter and let the foundation continue. I was already so wearied of seeing the hardships of all those who were helping me, more so than in seeing my own, that it didn't seem to be a bad idea to have an income until our adversaries quieted down, and then give it up afterward. At other times, wretched and imperfect as I am, I thought that perhaps the Lord wanted this since we couldn't succeed without it; I was disposed to accept the compromise.

20. While I was in prayer the night before this matter was to be discussed, and I had already begun to agree, the Lord told me not to agree, that if in the beginning we accepted an income they wouldn't allow us afterward to renounce it, as well as some other things. That same night the holy Friar Peter of Alcántara appeared to me, for he was already dead. And before he died

he had written to me—²³ since he had known about the strong opposition and persecution we were undergoing—that he rejoiced the foundation was being so vehemently opposed, that that was a sign the Lord would be very much served in this monastery in that the devil was interfering so much to prevent it, and that I should in no way decide to receive an income. And in the letter he urged me as much as two or three times not to accept an income, and that if I followed this advice everything would come about as I desired. I had already, two or three times since his death, seen him and the great glory he possessed; so I wasn't frightened. Rather I rejoiced greatly, for he always appeared in his glorified body, filled with great glory; it gave me a powerful feeling of glory to see him. I recall that the first time I saw him he told me, among other things, about how sublime his joy was and how the penance he had performed brought him fortune in that he had gained such a reward.

21. Since I believe I already said something about these apparitions,²⁴ I'm not saying any more than that this time he looked severe and told me only that I should by no means accept an income and asked why I didn't want to take his advice, and disappeared immediately. I was startled, and the next day I at once told the gentleman—for he was the one to whom I had recourse in everything since he was the most involved in the project—what took place and that he should by no means agree to an income, but that the lawsuit should go forward. He was much more convinced about this than I, and very happy. Later he told me how reluctantly he had agreed with the compromise.

22. Afterward, when the negotiations were on their way toward a settlement, another person, a very zealous servant of God came to me saying the matter should be put into the hands of learned men.²⁵ As a result I had many worries. Some of those who were helping me agreed with this proposal; this snarl in the affairs, which was caused by the devil, turned out to be the most complicated tangle of all. The Lord helped me in everything, for in a summary like this you can't explain all that took place in the two years from the time this house was founded to the time the litigation ended. This last phase and the first were the

most laborious.

23. Well, once the city was placated, the Dominican Father *Presentado*²⁶ managed to be a great help to us even though he wasn't present. But the Lord had brought him at a time very opportune for us, and it seemed His Majesty brought him here solely for this purpose because this Father told me afterward that he had not had any reason to come, but had learned of our need by accident. His presence was what was needed. After he had departed again, he tried in several ways to get our Father Provincial to give me and some others with me permission to come to this house to recite the Divine Office and teach it to those who were here, for it seemed almost impossible that the provincial would give it so quickly. The day that we came was one of greatest consolation for me.

24. Before entering the new monastery, while in prayer outside in the church, being almost in rapture, I saw Christ who seemed to be receiving me with great love and placing a crown on my head and thanking me for what I did for His Mother.

Another time while all were at prayer in choir after compline, I saw our Lady in the greatest glory clothed in a white mantle; it seemed she was sheltering us all under it. I understood how high a degree of glory the Lord would give to those living in this house.

25. Once the liturgical Offices were initiated the people began to grow very devoted to this house. More nuns were accepted, and the Lord started to inspire our most vigorous persecutors to show us much favor; and they gave us alms. So they approved of what they had so greatly disapproved. Little by little they abandoned the lawsuit and said that now they knew the house was a work of God since in spite of so much opposition His Majesty desired the foundation to go forward. And there isn't anyone at present who doesn't think it was right to let the house be founded. Thus they are so careful about providing us with alms that, without our asking or begging from anyone, the Lord stirs them to send alms to us. We get along without any lack of necessities, and I hope in the Lord things will always be like this. Since the nuns are few in number, if they do what they are obliged to, as His Majesty now gives them the grace to do, I

am sure they won't lack anything or have need to be anxious or to importune anyone. The Lord will take care of them as He has up to now.

26. It is the most wonderful consolation for me to be able to live with souls so detached. Their conversation is about how they can make progress in the service of God. Solitude is their comfort, and the thought of seeing others (when doing so is not a help toward an enkindling within them of a greater love of their Spouse) is a burden to them even though these others may be relatives. As a result no one comes to this house save those who speak about this love, for otherwise neither are the nuns satisfied nor are their visitors. Their language allows them to speak only of God, and so they only understand one who speaks the same language; nor would they in turn be understood by anyone who doesn't. We observe the rule of our Lady of Mt. Carmel and keep it without mitigation as ordained by the Friar Cardinal Hugo of Saint Sabina and given in 1248, in the fifth year of the pontificate of Pope Innocent IV.²⁷

27. It seems to me that all the trials suffered were well worth it. Now, although there is some austerity because meat is never eaten without necessity and there is an eight-month fast and other things, as are seen in the first rule, this is still in many respects considered small by the Sisters; and they have other observances which seemed to us necessary in order to observe the rule with greater perfection. I hope in the Lord that what has been begun will prosper, as His Majesty has told me it would.

28. The other house that the *beata* I mentioned²⁸ was trying to found was also favored by the Lord. It was established in Alcalá, and there was no lack of strong opposition to her; nor did she fail to suffer great trials. I know that full religious observance is kept there in conformity with this first rule of ours. May it please the Lord that all be to His glory and praise and to that of the glorious Virgin Mary, whose habit we wear, amen.

29. I believe your Reverence²⁹ will be annoyed by the long account I've given of this monastery, but it is very short in comparison with the many trials we suffered and the wonders the Lord has worked for it. There are many witnesses who are able to swear to these marvels, and so I beg your Reverence for the

love of God that if you think you should tear up what else is written here you preserve whatever pertains to this monastery. And when I'm dead, give it to the Sisters who live here that when those who are to come see the many things His Majesty arranged for its establishment by means of so wretched and dreadful a thing as myself they might be greatly encouraged to serve God and strive that what has been begun may not collapse but always flourish.

Since the Lord has desired so particularly to show His favor toward the establishment of this house, it seems to me that one would be doing a great wrong and would be punished by God were one to begin to mitigate the way of perfection that the Lord has initiated here and so favored that it can be borne with such great ease; it is very clearly seen to be bearable and can be carried out calmly. The main disposition required for always living in this calm is the desire to rejoice solely in Christ, one's Spouse. This is what they must always have as their aim: to be alone with Him alone. And there should be no more than thirteen in the house,³⁰ for after much advice I have learned that this is a fitting number; and I've also found it out through experience. To live the spiritual life as we do, as well as from alms, without begging, does not allow for a larger number. Let them always have greater trust in the one who through many trials and the prayer of many persons strove for what would be better. And by the great happiness and joy and small amount of hardship we have had during these years spent in this house, in which we find that all of us have had much better health than usual, it is obvious that this number is what is fitting. Those who think the life harsh should blame their own lack of spirituality and not what is observed here, for they should be able to live it since persons who are sickly or have delicate health live it with such ease; they should go to another monastery where they can be saved in a way conformable to their own spirituality.

Chapter 37

Discusses the effects of a certain favor the Lord granted her. Some very good doctrine accompanies this discussion. Tells how one should strive for a greater degree of glory, and esteem it highly, and that we shouldn't neglect everlasting goods for any difficulty.

IT IS HARD FOR ME to say more than I've already said about the favors the Lord has granted me,¹ and it is already too much for anyone to believe that He granted them to so dreadful a person. But to obey the Lord, who commanded me to do so, and your Reverences,² I will say something to give Him glory. May it please His Majesty that some soul may benefit by seeing that the Lord has desired to favor a thing so miserable. (What will He grant to one who has truly served Him?) May all be encouraged to please His Majesty since even in this life He bestows tokens like these of His love.

2. First, it must be understood that in these favors the Lord grants to the soul there can be either more or less glory. For in some visions the glory, delight, and consolation so surpass what is given in others that I am amazed the difference in rejoicing can be so great, even in this life. The difference in a delight and favor God gives in a vision or rapture can be so great that it seems impossible that there could be anything more to desire here below, and so the soul doesn't desire or ask for any more happiness. Since the time the Lord showed me how great the difference is in heaven between the joy of some and the joy of others, I have seen clearly that also here on earth the Lord has no measure in giving when He is pleased to do so. Thus I wouldn't want to use any measure in my service of His Majesty and in employing all my life and strength and health to this end. I wouldn't want to lose through my own fault as much as one tiny particle of greater glory. So I say that if I were to be asked which I prefer, either to bear all the trials of the world until its end and afterward ascend to a little more glory or without any trials to descend to a little bit less, I would very eagerly choose all the trials for a little more of rejoicing in the knowledge of

God's grandeurs; I see that whoever understands Him more loves and praises Him more.

3. I don't say that were I even in the lowest place in heaven I wouldn't be very happy and consider myself very fortunate to be there. Since I have deserved the lowest place in hell, the Lord would be showing me great mercy in bringing me to heaven; may it please His Majesty that I go there and that He not look upon my great sins. What I am saying is that if I could and if the Lord gave me the grace to work hard, I wouldn't want to lose anything through my own fault even if avoiding the loss were at a very great cost to myself. How wretched I am, for with so many sins I had lost everything!

4. It is also noteworthy that in every favor the Lord granted me, whether vision or revelation, my soul gained something; through some visions it gained a great deal. The vision of Christ left upon me an impression of His most extraordinary beauty, and the impression remains today; one time is sufficient to make this imprint. How much deeper it becomes as the Lord grants this favor more often! The benefit I received was most advantageous, and this is what it consisted of: I had a serious fault that did me much harm; it was that when I began to know that certain persons like me, and I found them attractive, I became so attached that my memory was bound strongly by the thought of them. There was no intention to offend God, but I was happy to see these persons and think about them and about the good things I saw in them. This was something so harmful it was leading my soul seriously astray. After I beheld the extraordinary beauty of the Lord, I didn't see anyone who in comparison with Him seemed to attract me or occupy my thoughts. By turning my gaze just a little inward to behold the image I have in my soul, I obtained such freedom in this respect that everything I see here below seems loathsome when compared to the excellent and beautiful qualities I beheld in this Lord. There is no knowledge or any kind of gift that I think could amount to anything when placed alongside of what it is to hear just one word spoken from that divine mouth; how much more so when the words are so many. I hold that it would be impossible for me (provided the Lord would not permit that, on account of

my sins, this impression be erased from my memory) to be so occupied with the thought of anyone that I couldn't free myself from it by only a slight effort to remember this Lord.

5. I experienced this freedom in the case of one of my confessors. Since I believe that my confessors stand so truly in the place of God, I think they are the ones for whom I feel the most benevolence. Since I am always very fond of those who guide my soul and since I felt secure, I showed them that I liked them. They, as God-fearing servants of the Lord, were afraid lest in any way I would become attached and bound to this love, even though in a holy way, and they showed me their displeasure. This happened after I became so subject to obeying them, for before that I didn't experience this love. I laughed to myself to see how mistaken they were, although I didn't always express so clearly how little attached I was to anyone. But I assured them; and as they got to know me better they realized what I owed to the Lord, for these suspicions they had about me always came at the beginning of our acquaintance.

A much greater love for and confidence in this Lord began to develop in me when I saw Him as one with whom I could converse so continually. I saw that He was man, even though He was God; that He wasn't surprised by human weaknesses; that He understands our miserable make-up, subject to many falls on account of the first sin which He came to repair. I can speak with Him as with a friend, even though He is Lord. I know that He isn't like those we have as lords here on earth, all of whose lordship consists in artificial displays: they have to have designated times for speaking and designated persons to whom they speak. If some poor little creature has any business matter to take up, what roundabout ways they must go through and what trials and favors it costs them in order to get to speak to this lord! Oh, and if it is with the king! Then, people who are poor or those who don't belong to the nobility can't even get near; but they must ask those who are the court minions. And most assuredly these latter are not persons who have trampled the world underfoot, for those who have, speak the truth since they know no fear, nor are they obligated to anyone. Such people are not for the palace, for there you mustn't speak out but be

silent about what appears to be wrong; you mustn't even dare think about it if you don't want to fall into disfavor.

6. O King of Glory and Lord of all kings! How true that Your kingdom is not armed with trifles, since it has no end! How true that there is no need for intermediaries with You! Upon beholding Your person one sees immediately that You alone, on account of the majesty You reveal, merit to be called Lord. There's no need for people in waiting or for guards in order that one know that You are King. Here on earth, if a king were all by himself, he would fail to be recognized. However much he would want to be recognized as king, he wouldn't be believed; he would have no more to show than anyone else. It's necessary that one see the reason for believing he is a king, and that is the purpose of these artificial displays. If he didn't have them, no one would esteem him at all; the appearance of power doesn't come from him. It is from others that his display of grandeur must come.

O my Lord! O my King! Who now would know how to represent Your majesty! It's impossible not to see that You in Yourself are a great Emperor, for to behold Your majesty is startling; and the more one beholds along with this majesty, Lord, Your humility and the love You show to someone like myself the more startling it becomes. Nevertheless, we can converse and speak with You as we like, once the first fright and fear in beholding Your majesty passes; although the fear of offending You becomes greater. But the fear is not one of punishment, for this punishment is considered nothing in comparison with losing You.

7. These are the benefits deriving from this vision, besides other great ones it leaves in the soul. If the vision is from God it is known through its effects—when the soul is in light. Since the Lord often, as I mentioned,³ wants it to be in darkness and not see this light, it is not surprising that one as wretched as I be afraid. It happened just now that for eight days it seemed there wasn't any knowledge in me—nor could I acquire any—of what I owed God, or any remembrance of His favors; my soul was in a terrible stupor and in I don't know what kind of condition, nor do I know how it got that way. It wasn't having bad thoughts, but it was so incapable of good thoughts that I

laughed at myself. It pleased me to see the weakness of a soul when God is not always working in it. I saw clearly that in this state the soul is not without Him, for this trial is not like the great ones I mentioned I sometimes have.⁴ But even though the soul puts wood on the fire and does this little it can do of itself, the fire of love does not burn. It is through His great mercy that it sees at least the smoke so as to know that the fire is not entirely dead. The Lord returns to rekindle it. For even though a soul breaks its head in arranging the wood and blowing on the fire, it seems that everything it does only smothers the fire more. I believe the best thing for it to do is to surrender itself completely to the fact that of itself it can do nothing and to become occupied, as I said,⁵ in some other meritorious works. For perhaps the Lord removes the prayer so that it might undertake these works and come to know through experience how little it can do by itself.

8. Indeed, I took delight in the Lord today and dared to complain of His Majesty, and I said to Him: “How is it, my God, that it’s not enough that You keep me in this miserable life and that for love of You I undergo it and desire to live where everything hinders the enjoyment of You, in that I have to eat and sleep and carry on business and talk with everyone (and I suffer all for love of You, as You well know, my Lord, because it’s the greatest torment for me); how is it that when there is so little time left over to enjoy Your presence You hide from me? How is this compatible with Your mercy? How can the love You bear me allow this? I believe, Lord, that if it were possible for me to hide from You as it is for You to hide from me that the love You have for me would not suffer it; but You are with me and see me always. Don’t tolerate this, my Lord! I implore You to see that it is injurious to one who loves You so much.”

9. These and other things it occurred to me to say, while understanding first how lenient the punishment reserved for me in hell was in comparison with the place I deserved. But sometimes love becomes so foolish I don’t make sense; with my whole mind I make these complaints, and the Lord puts up with it all. May so good a King be praised! We wouldn’t dare say these things to earthly kings! Yet I’m not surprised that one

doesn't dare speak to the king or to his representatives, for there is reason for fear. The world is such that we would have to have longer lives—if some part of our lives is going to be spent in serving God—to learn all the nice points and new rules and practices of etiquette. I bless myself when I observe what is going on. The fact is that when I entered this monastery of St. Joseph I still didn't know how to live. It's no laughing matter when there is some carelessness in dealing with people who deserve much more. They, indeed, take it as such an affront that it becomes necessary to show proof of your good intentions, if there is, as I say, some carelessness; even then please God they will believe you.

10. I repeat that indeed I didn't know how to live. Here is a poor tired soul: it sees how they command her to keep her thoughts always on God and they insist it is necessary to do this in order to free oneself from many dangers; on the other hand it sees it mustn't miss any fine points in the world's rules of etiquette lest it become an occasion of temptation to those whose reputations are based on these details. These rules weary me, and I was never done excusing myself, because I couldn't help—even though I studied the matter—but to make many mistakes. For, as I say, in the world these mistakes are not taken lightly. And is it true that religious who should be held excused in these matters are in fact excused? No, it is not; it is said that monasteries must be schools of etiquette and that these things should be known. I for one certainly cannot understand this. I have thought that some saint said the monastery should be a school for the instruction of those wanting to be courtiers in heaven—and this has all been understood backward. It is right for anyone who cares about heaven to have a continual solicitude about pleasing God and despising the world. It is beyond me how anyone can have so much concern about pleasing those who live in the world by means such as these, which are so changeable. If you could learn the rules once and for all, you could let the matter pass. But just for the titles of address on a letter there's need for a university chair, so to speak, to lecture on how it's to be done. For sometimes you have to leave a margin on this side of the page, sometimes on the other; and someone who's

not usually addressed as magnifico must be then addressed as illustrious.

11. I don't know how it's all going to end up; even though I'm not yet fifty, I've already seen so many changes I don't even know how to live anymore. What will they do who are now being born and will live for many years? I surely pity spiritual people who are obliged for certain holy reasons to live in the world; it is a terrible cross they must bear with all these rules of etiquette. If you could reach an agreement with everyone and become ignorant in this science and desire that others consider you to be so, you would be freed from a lot of troubles.

12. But what foolishness I've got into! Wanting to speak of God's grandeurs, I've ended up speaking about petty worldly things. Since the Lord has granted me the favor to abandon this world, I want to go forth from it. Let those who love such trivial things attend to them. Please God that in the next life, which will be without change, we shall not have to pay for this. Amen.

Chapter 38

Deals with some great favors the Lord granted her by showing her certain heavenly secrets, and with other great visions and revelations that His Majesty wanted her to see. Tells of the effects they had on her and of the great profit her soul derived from them.

ONE NIGHT, BEING SO ILL that I wanted to excuse myself from mental prayer, I took my rosary in order to occupy myself in vocal prayer. I tried not to recollect my intellect, even though externally I was recollected in the oratory. When the Lord desires, these devices are of little avail. I was doing this for only a short while when a spiritual rapture came upon me so forcefully that I had no power to resist it. It seemed to me I was brought into heaven, and the first persons I saw there were my father and mother. I saw things so marvelous—in as short a time as it takes to recite a Hail Mary—that I indeed remained outside myself; the experience seemed to me too

great a favor. I say it lasted a short time, but perhaps it took a little longer; the impression is that the time was very short. I feared lest the experience be some illusion, although it didn't seem so to me. I didn't know what to do, because I was very ashamed to go to my confessor about this. I don't think the shame was from humility, but I thought he would make fun of me and say: Oh, what a St. Paul you are, or a St. Jerome,¹ that you see heavenly things! And that these glorious saints experienced similar things made me more afraid. I did nothing but weep a great deal, for I didn't think there was any basis for my having such an experience. Finally, however much I disliked doing so, I went to my confessor; I never dared to remain silent about such things—however much I regretted having to speak of them—on account of the great fear I had of being deceived. Since he saw I was so anxious, he consoled me very much and said many kind things in order to free me from my troubled feelings.

2. As time went on, it happened—and continues to happen sometimes—that the Lord showed me greater secrets. There is no way in which the soul can see more than what is manifested, nor is this possible; so my soul never saw more than what the Lord wanted to show it each time. What He revealed was so great that the least part of it would have been sufficient to leave me marveling and very proficient in considering and judging all the things of life as little. I should like to be able to explain something about the least of what I came to know; and in thinking about how this can be done, I find that it is impossible. In just the difference between the light we see and the one represented there, although all is light, there is no comparison; next to that light the sun's brilliance seems to be something very blurred. In sum, the imagination, however keen it may be, cannot paint or sketch what this light is like, or any of the things the Lord gave me knowledge of. He bestows along with this knowledge a delight so sublime as to be indescribable, for all the senses rejoice to such a high degree and in such sweetness that the delight cannot be exaggerated—so it's better not to say any more.

3. Once, for more than an hour, since it doesn't seem to me that He left my side, the Lord was showing me admirable things

in this way. He said to me: “See, daughter, what those who are against me lose; don’t neglect to tell them.” Ah, my Lord, if Your Majesty doesn’t give them light, what little benefit will what I say bring to those whose deeds blind them! Some persons to whom You have given light will profit from knowing about Your grandeurs; but I don’t think anyone who sees they are revealed to someone as dreadful and wretched as myself will believe me. May Your name and mercy be blessed, because at least in myself I have seen a recognizable improvement. Afterward I wanted to remain in this state always and not return to everyday living, for the contempt that was left in me for everything earthly was great; these things all seemed to me like dung, and I see how basely we are occupied, those of us who are detained by earthly things.

4. Once, when I was with that lady I mentioned, I was ill with heart sickness; as I said my heart trouble was severe.² although it isn’t now. Since she was very charitable, she gave orders that I be shown some of her jewels of gold and precious stone that were very valuable, especially one of the diamonds that was appraised highly. She thought they would make me happy. Recalling what the Lord has kept for us, I was laughing to myself and feeling pity at the sight of what people esteem. And I thought of how impossible it would be for me, even if I tried, to esteem those things if the Lord didn’t remove from my memory the things He had shown me. In this way the soul has great dominion, so great that I don’t know whether anyone who doesn’t possess this dominion will understand it. It is the detachment proper and natural to us because it comes without labor on our part. God does it all, for His Majesty shows these truths in such a way, and they are so imprinted in the soul, that it is seen clearly we couldn’t acquire them by ourselves in this way and in so short a time.

5. Likewise, little fear of death, which I always feared greatly remained. Now death seems to me to be the easiest thing for anyone who serves God, for in a moment the soul finds it is freed from this prison and brought to rest. I think these raptures in which God carries away the spirit and reveals to it such excellent things are like the departure of the soul from the body, for in

an instant these good things are seen all together. Let us omit any word about the pains suffered when soul and body are torn from each other, for little attention should be paid to them. And the death of those who truly love God and have despised the things of this life must be more gentle.

6. These revelations also helped me very much, I think, in coming to know our true country and realizing that we are pilgrims here below; it is a wonderful thing to see what is there and know where we shall live. For if someone has to go to live permanently in another country, it is a great help to them in undergoing the struggle of the journey to have seen that it is a land where they will be very much at ease. These revelations are also a great help for reflecting on heavenly things and striving that our conversation be there; these things are done with ease. Doing them is very beneficial; merely to look toward heaven recollects the soul, for since the Lord desired to reveal something of what is there, the soul concentrates on it. It happens to me sometimes that those who I know live there are my companions and the ones in whom I find comfort; it seems to me that they are the ones who are truly alive and that those who live here on earth are so dead that not even the whole world, I think, affords me company, especially when I experience those impulses.

7. Everything I see with my bodily eyes seems to be a dream and a mockery. What I have already seen with the eyes of my soul is what I desire; and since it is seen as something far away, this life is a death. In sum, the favor the Lord grants to whomever He gives visions like these is extraordinary. They are a great help, especially in bearing a heavy cross; since nothing satisfies the soul, everything causes displeasure. And if the Lord didn't allow that sometimes the favor be forgotten, even though it again comes to mind, I don't know how one could live. May He be blessed and praised forever and ever! May it please His Majesty, by the blood His Son shed for me, since He has desired that I understand something of so many great blessings and in some way begin to enjoy them, that what happened to Lucifer, who through his own fault lost everything, may not happen to me. May He because of who He is not allow it, for I have no small fear sometimes; although, on the other hand, and very habitually,

God's mercy makes me feel safe. Since He has freed me from so many sins, He will not want to let me out of His hands to go astray. This I beg your Reverence always to beg of Him.

8. The favors mentioned are not as great, in my opinion, as the one I shall now speak of, and this for many reasons and on account of the great blessings and remarkable fortitude of soul it left in me; although each favor when looked at in itself is so great it is beyond comparison.

9. One day on the vigil of Pentecost I went to a secluded spot after Mass where I often prayed, and I began to read about this feast in a volume by the Carthusian.³ Reading of the signs beginners, proficients, and the perfect must have in order to recognize whether the Holy Spirit is with them, it seemed to me that by the goodness of God and insofar as I could make out He was not failing to be with me. I praised Him and remembered that once before when I read the passage I really lacked everything; I had realized this very clearly, just as now I understood the opposite about myself. So I knew that what the Lord had granted me was a great favor. Thus I began to consider the place I had merited in hell on account of my sins, and I gave much praise to God because it didn't seem I recognized my soul by the change I saw. While I was reflecting on this, a great impulse came upon me without my understanding the reason. It seemed my soul wanted to leave my body because it didn't fit there nor could it wait for so great a good. The impulse was so extreme I couldn't help myself, and it was, in my opinion, different from previous impulses; nor did my soul know what had happened, nor what it wanted, so stirred up was it. Although I was seated, I tried to lean against the wall because my natural power was completely gone.

10. While in this state I saw a dove over my head. It was very different from doves on earth since it didn't have earthly feathers, but the wings had little shells that gave off great brilliance. It was larger than a dove. It seems to me I heard the noise it made with its wings. It fluttered about for the space of a Hail Mary. My soul was already in such a condition that in losing itself it lost sight of the dove. The spirit was quieted by so good a guest; for, in my opinion, a marvelous favor like this should have

frightened and disturbed it. And when it began to enjoy the guest, the fear was taken away and the joyous quietude began while the soul continued in rapture.

11. The glory of this rapture was extraordinary. I remained for the rest of Pentecost so stupefied and stunned I didn't know what to do with myself, or how I had the capacity for so great a favor and gift. I neither heard nor saw, so to speak, but experienced wonderful interior joy. I noted from that day the greatest improvement in myself brought about by a more sublime love of God and much stronger virtues. May He be blessed and praised forever, amen.

12. One other time I saw the same dove over the head of a Dominican Father,⁴ except that I think the rays and splendor of the same wings extended much further. It was made known to me that he would draw souls to God.

13. At another time I saw our Lady placing a very white mantle on the *presentado*, from this Dominican order, of whom I have sometimes spoken.⁵ She told me that, because of the service he had rendered her in helping toward the foundation of this house, she gave him that mantle as a sign that she would keep his soul spotless from then on and that he would not fall into mortal sin. I am certain that so it was. For a few years later he died, and his death and the life he lived were so penitential, and the death was so holy, that insofar as one can know there is no reason for doubt. A friar who was present at his death told me that before this dying Father expired he told this friar about how St. Thomas was with him. He died with great joy and desire to leave this exile. Afterward he at times appeared to me in resplendent glory and told me some things. His prayer had reached such a degree that at the time of his death when he wanted to avoid mental prayer because of his great weakness, he couldn't on account of his many raptures. He wrote to me a little before he died asking what he should do, because when he finished saying Mass he often went into rapture without being able to prevent it. God in the end rewarded him for the great service he had rendered Him throughout his whole life.

14. I saw some of the wonderful favors the Lord bestowed on the rector of the Society of Jesus whom I have mentioned

at times.⁶ So as not to make this too long I will not put them down here. Once a severe trial came upon him in which he was very persecuted and found himself in deep affliction. One day, while I was hearing Mass, at the elevation of the host, I saw Christ on the cross. He spoke some words of consolation that I was to tell this rector and some other words foretelling what was to come and reminding the rector of what Christ suffered for him and announcing that he should prepare himself to suffer. This gave the rector great consolation and courage, and everything came about afterward as the Lord had told me.

15. I saw great things concerning members of the order (of the whole order together) that this Father belonged to, that is, of the Society of Jesus. I saw them in heaven, sometimes with white banners in their hands, and, as I say, other very admirable things about them. Thus I hold this order in great veneration, for I've had many dealings with them and I see that their lives are in conformity with what the Lord has made known to me about them.

16. One night while I was in prayer the Lord began to speak some words by which he made me remember how bad my life had been, and these words filled me with shame and grief. Although they were not severe, they caused consuming sorrow and pain. More improvement in self-knowledge is felt from one of these words than would be got from many days of reflection on our wretchedness, for it engraves on us an undeniable truth. He brought before me the extremely vain friendships I had had and told me I should esteem highly the fact that a will that had been as badly occupied as mine should desire to be fixed on Him, and that He would accept it.

At other times He told me I should recall the time when, it seems, I considered it an honor to go against His will. Again, that I should remember what I owed Him, that when I was giving Him the hardest blow, He was granting me favors. If I have some faults, which are not few, His Majesty gives me an understanding of them that, it seems, reduces me to nothing; and since I have many, this happens often. It happened to me that, after having been reprimanded by my confessor, I desired to find consolation in prayer; and found there the true reprimand.

17. To return, then, to what I was saying;⁷ since the Lord had begun to recall to me my wretched life and since I hadn't done anything, in my opinion, I wondered, in the midst of tears, if He desired to grant me some favor. It ordinarily happens when I receive some favor from the Lord that I am first humbled within myself so that I might see more clearly how far I am from deserving favors; I think the Lord must do this. After a short while my spirit was so enraptured it seemed to me to be almost entirely out of the body—at least the spirit isn't aware that it is living in the body. I saw the most sacred humanity with more extraordinary glory than I had ever seen. It was made manifest to me through a knowledge admirable and clear that the humanity was taken into the bosom of the Father. I wouldn't know how to describe the nature of this, because, without my seeing anything, it seemed to me I was in the presence of the Divinity. My amazement was such that I think for several days I couldn't return to myself; and it always seemed to me that I went about in the presence of that majesty of the Son of God, although the experience wasn't the same as when it first happened. This I understood clearly, but the vision is so strongly engraved on the imagination that no matter how short a while it lasts the impression left cannot be removed for some time; and the impression is very consoling and beneficial.

18. I saw this same vision three other times. It is in my opinion the most sublime vision the Lord granted me the favor of seeing, and it bears along with it marvelous benefits. It seems it purifies the soul in an extraordinary way and removes almost entirely the strength of this sensitive part of our nature. It is a great flame that seems to burn away and annihilate all of life's desires. For even though, glory to God, I didn't have any desires for vain things, it was made clear to me in this experience how everything was vanity. How vain, how truly vain are the lordships of earth! It is a powerful lesson for raising one's desires to pure truth. There is impressed upon one a reverence I wouldn't know how to speak of; for it is very different from the kind we can acquire here on earth. Great fear is caused in the soul when it sees how it dared, or how anyone can dare, to offend so extraordinary a majesty.

19. I have sometimes mentioned these effects of visions as well as other things about them, and I have already said that the benefit can be greater or less.⁸ The benefit coming from this vision is extremely great. When I approached to receive Communion and recalled that extraordinary majesty I had seen and considered that it was present in the Blessed Sacrament (the Lord often desires that I behold it in the host), my hair stood on end; the whole experience seemed to annihilate me. O my Lord! If You did not hide Your grandeur, who would approach so often a union of something so dirty and miserable with such great majesty! May the angels and all creatures praise You, for You so measure things in accordance with our weakness that when we rejoice in Your sovereign favors Your great power does not so frighten us that, as weak and wretched people, we would not dare enjoy them.

20. What once happened to a peasant could happen to us, and I know that this really happened. He found a treasure that was worth more than his lowly frame of mind was capable of handling, and the possession of it caused such sadness to come upon him that, from pure affliction and worry over not knowing what to do with the treasure, he gradually died. If he hadn't found it all at once, but if it had been given to him little by little in order to sustain him, since he was poor, he would have lived more happily and it wouldn't have cost him his life.

21. O Wealth of the poor, how admirably You know how to sustain souls! And without their seeing such great wealth, You show it to them little by little. When I behold majesty as extraordinary as this concealed in something as small as the host, it happens afterward that I marvel at wisdom so wonderful, and I fail to know how the Lord gives me the courage or strength to approach Him. If He who has granted, and still does grant me so many favors, did not give this strength, it would be impossible to conceal the fact or resist shouting aloud about marvels so great. For what will a wretched person, like myself, who is weighed down with abominations and who has wasted her life with so little fear of God, feel when she sees she is approaching this Lord of such powerful majesty and that this Lord desires that the soul behold it? How will a mouth that has spoken so

many words against this very Lord be united with that most glorious body, which abounds in purity and compassion? For the love that face shows, so beautiful in its tenderness and affability, makes the soul much more sorrowful and afflicted for not having served Him than does the majesty it beholds in Him cause it to fear. But how could I have experienced twice what I saw and am about to describe?⁹

22. Certainly, my Lord and my glory, I am about to say that in some way in these great afflictions my soul feels I have done something in Your service. Alas! I don't know what I'm saying to myself, because almost without my uttering this I'm already putting it down in writing. I find I'm disturbed and somewhat outside myself since I have brought these things back to mind. If this sentiment had come from me, I might truly have said that I had done something for You, my Lord; but since there can be no good thought if You do not give it, there's no reason to be thankful to myself. I am the debtor, Lord, and You the offended one.

23. Once, while approaching to receive Communion, I saw with my soul's eyes more clearly than with my bodily eyes two devils whose appearance was abominable. It seems to me their horns were wrapped around the poor priest's throat, and in the host that was going to be given to me I saw my Lord with the majesty I mentioned placed in the priest's hands, which were clearly seen to be His offender's; and I understood that that soul was in mortal sin. What would it be, my Lord, to see Your beauty in the midst of such abominable figures? They were as though frightened and terrified in Your presence, for it seems they would have very eagerly fled had You allowed them. This vision caused me such great disturbance I don't know how I was able to receive Communion, and I was left with a great fear, thinking that if the vision had been from God, His Majesty would not have permitted me to see the evil that was in that soul. The Lord Himself told me to pray for him and that He had permitted it so that I might understand the power of the words of consecration and how God does not fail to be present, however evil the priest who recites them, and that I might see His great goodness since He places Himself in those hands of His enemy, and all out of love

for me and for everyone. I understood well how much more priests are obliged to be good than are others, how deplorable a thing it is to receive this most Blessed Sacrament unworthily, and how much the devil is lord over the soul in mortal sin. It did me a great deal of good and brought me deep understanding of what I owed God. May He be blessed forever and ever.

24. At another time something else happened to me that frightened me very much. I was at a place where a certain person died who for many years had lived a wicked life, from what I knew. But he had been sick for two years, and in some things it seems he had made amends. He died without confession, but nevertheless it didn't seem to me he would be condemned. While the body was being wrapped in its shroud, I saw many devils take that body; and it seemed they were playing with it and punishing it. This terrified me, for with large hooks they were dragging it from one devil to the other. Since I saw it buried with the honor and ceremonies accorded to all, I reflected on the goodness of God, how He did not want that soul to be defamed, but wanted the fact that it was His enemy to be concealed.

25. I was half stupefied from what I had seen. During the whole ceremony I didn't see another devil. Afterward when they put the body in the grave, there was such a multitude of them inside ready to take it that I was frantic at the sight of it, and there was need for no small amount of courage to conceal this. I reflected on what they would do to the soul when they had such dominion over the unfortunate body. May it please the Lord that what I have seen—a thing so frightful!—will be seen by all those who are in such an evil state; I think it would prove a powerful help toward their living a good life. All of this gives me greater knowledge of what I owe God and of what He freed me from. I was very frightened until I spoke about it to my confessor, wondering if it was an illusion caused by the devil to defame that soul, although it wasn't considered to be the soul of someone with a very deep Christian spirit. Truly since the vision was not an illusion, it frightens me every time I think of it.

26. Now that I have begun to speak of some visions of the dead, I want to mention certain happenings in which the Lord in this regard was pleased that I see some souls. I shall mention

only a few so as to be brief and because knowing about them isn't necessary; I mean for anyone's benefit.

I was told that someone who had been our provincial was dead (although when he died he was in another province). I had had some dealings with him and was indebted to him for some good deeds.¹⁰ He was a person of many virtues. As soon as I learned he was dead, I felt much disturbance because I feared for his salvation in that he had been a superior for twenty years. Being a superior is something I am indeed very afraid of since I think having souls in one's charge involves a lot of danger; with much anxiety I went to an oratory. I offered up for him all the good I had done in my life, which must in fact amount to little, and so I asked the Lord to supply from His own merits what was necessary for that soul to be freed from purgatory.

27. While beseeching the Lord for this as best I could, it seemed to me that person came out from the depths of the earth at my right side and that I saw him ascend to heaven with the greatest happiness. He had been well advanced in years, but I saw him as only about thirty, or even less I think, and his countenance was resplendent. This vision passed very quickly; but I was so extremely consoled that his death could never cause me any more sorrow, although I saw persons who were filled with grief over his loss since he had been generally highly esteemed. The consolation my soul experienced was so great I couldn't worry about him, nor could I doubt that it was a vision; I mean that it was not an illusion. No more than fifteen days had passed since his death. However, I didn't neglect to get others to pray for him and to pray myself, except that I couldn't do so with the eagerness I would have if I hadn't seen this vision. When the Lord shows some persons to me in this way and afterward I desire to pray for them to His Majesty, it seems to me, without my being able to help it, that doing so is like giving alms to the rich. Afterward I learned—for he died quite far from here—of the death the Lord had given him; it was so greatly edifying, because of the knowledge, tears, and humility with which he died, that it left everyone amazed.

28. One of the nuns in the house who had been a great servant of God had been dead a little more than a day and a half.¹¹ A

nun was reciting a reading in the choir from the Office of the dead, which was being said for the departed soul, and I was standing so as to recite the verse with her. When she was half through the reading, I saw the nun who had died; it seemed to me her soul had come out at my right side just as in the previous case and was going to heaven. This was not an imaginative vision as was the former one, but like the others I mentioned;¹² yet this kind is as certain as the imaginative visions.

29. Eighteen or twenty years ago another nun died in the house I was in. She had always been sick and been a very good servant of God, devoted to her choir duties and most virtuous. I thought certainly she would not enter purgatory, because the illnesses she had suffered were many, and that she would have a surplus of merits. Four hours after her death, while reciting the hours of the Office before her burial, I understood she departed from purgatory and went to heaven.

30. While at a college of the Society of Jesus, experiencing the great trials in soul and body I said I sometimes go through,¹³ I was in such a state that I think I wasn't even able to receive a good thought. That night a Brother from the Society died in that house,¹⁴ and while I was praying for him as I could and hearing Mass said for him by another Father of the Society, a deep recollection came over me; I saw him ascend to heaven in great glory, and the Lord along with him. By special favor I understood that it was His Majesty going with him.

31. Another friar of our order, a truly very good friar,¹⁵ was seriously ill; while I was at Mass, I became recollected and saw that he was dead and that he ascended to heaven without entering purgatory. He died at the hour I saw him, according to what I learned later. I was amazed he hadn't entered purgatory. I understood that since he was a friar who had observed his vows well the Bulls of the order about not entering purgatory were beneficial to him. I don't know why I came to understand this. It seems to me it must have been because being a friar doesn't consist in the habit—I mean in wearing it—but in enjoying the state of higher perfection, which is what it means to be a friar.

32. I don't want to say anything more about these things, for as I have said there's no reason for my doing so—¹⁶ although

there are many things the Lord has granted me the favor of seeing. But of all that I've seen, I haven't known any soul that did not enter purgatory, with the exception of the soul of this Father and that of the holy Friar Peter of Alcántara and the Dominican Father I mentioned.¹⁷ In the case of some, the Lord was pleased that I behold the degrees of glory they possess, and he showed me the places assigned to them. Great is the difference that lies between the glory of some and that of others.¹⁸

Chapter 39

Continues on the same subject, telling of the great favors the Lord granted her. Treats of how He promised to answer her prayers for other persons. Tells of some remarkable instances in which His Majesty granted her this favor.

ONCE WHILE I WAS IMPLORING the Lord to give sight to a person to whom I was obligated and who had almost completely lost his vision, I was very grieved and feared that because of my sins the Lord would not hear me. The Lord appeared to me as He did at other times¹ and began to show me the wound in His left hand, and with the other hand He drew out a large nail that had been embedded there. It seemed to me that when the nail was pulled out His flesh was torn out along with it. The sharp pain was clearly evident, and I felt great pity. He told me that He who had suffered that for me should not be doubted, but that in a better way He would do what I had asked Him; that He had promised me there wasn't anything I might ask Him that He wouldn't do; that He already knew I wouldn't ask for anything other than what was in conformity with His glory; and that thus He would do what I was now requesting; that I should consider that even when I wasn't serving Him there wasn't anything I asked for that He didn't grant, and in a better way than I knew how to ask for; that how much more He would grant my petitions now that he knew I loved Him; that I shouldn't doubt this. I don't think eight days passed before the Lord gave sight back to that person. My confessor

knew of this soon afterward. It could be that this cure didn't come about because of my prayer; but since I had seen this vision, I felt such certitude that I thanked His Majesty as though the favor had been granted to me.

2. At another time there was a person very sick with a most painful illness, which I won't name here because I don't know what kind of illness it was.² What he suffered for two months was unbearable; the torment was lacerating. My confessor, who was the rector I mentioned above,³ went to see him; he took great pity on him and told me I should by all means go to see him, that since he was a relative of mine I could do this. I went and was moved to such pity for him that I began to beg the Lord insistently for his health. In this experience I saw fully and clearly the favor the Lord granted me; the next day this person was completely cured of that affliction.

3. Once I felt severely troubled because I knew that a person to whom I was very much obligated desired to do something serious against the honor of God, as well as his own; he was already very determined about the matter. My anxiety was so great I didn't know what to do. It no longer seemed there was any remedy to make him give up the idea. I begged the Lord with all my heart to provide a cure for him; but until seeing this cure I wasn't able to find any alleviation in my affliction. Being in such a state, I went to a secluded hermitage (for we have them in this monastery); and while in the one with the painting of Christ at the pillar,⁴ and begging Him to grant me this favor, I heard a very gentle voice speaking to me in a kind of whistling sound. My hair stood on end, for the voice frightened me. I wanted to understand what it was saying; but I couldn't, because it passed very quickly. When my fear was gone, for it went away quickly, I felt such quiet and joy and interior delight that I marvelled that just hearing the sound of a voice could effect so much in the soul; for I heard it with my bodily ears and without understanding a word. In this experience I realized that what I had asked for would be accomplished. As a result it happened that my affliction left me completely even though the prayer was not yet answered; the pain went away just as it would had I seen the prayer answered as it really was afterward. I told this to my

confessors, for I then had two who were very learned and were good servants of God.⁵

4. I knew a person who had resolved to serve God very earnestly and had devoted some days to prayer in which His Majesty granted him many favors. Because of some occasions of sin that he was in, he gave up prayer and did not withdraw from these occasions; and they were indeed dangerous. This pained me deeply since he was a person I loved very much and to whom I owed a great deal. I believe it was more than a month in which I didn't do anything else but beg God to bring this soul back to Himself. One day, while in prayer, I saw a devil at my side who very angrily was tearing to shreds some papers he had in his hands. This gave me great consolation, for it seemed to me that what I had been asking for had been accomplished. And so it was, for afterward, I learned that this person had made his confession with great contrition and returned to God so sincerely that I hope in His Majesty he will always make progress. May God be blessed forever. Amen.

5. It often happens that our Lord draws souls away from serious sin and also that He leads others to greater perfection because of my beseeching Him. The Lord has granted me so many favors by freeing souls from purgatory and doing other noteworthy things that I would tire myself and tire whoever reads this if I mentioned them all. He has granted much more in regard to the health of souls than He has in regard to the health of bodies. This has become something well known, and there are many witnesses to it. At the beginning it made me very scrupulous because I couldn't help believing that the Lord granted these favors because of my prayer—setting aside the main fact of His doing them solely out of His goodness. But now there are so many cases, and they are so obvious to other persons, that it doesn't bother me to believe this. I praise His Majesty—and am embarrassed—because I see that I'm more indebted to Him; the fact that He does this quickens my love and causes an increase in my desire to serve Him. What amazes me more is that I'm unable to ask, even though I want to, for the things the Lord finds unsuitable; I feel so little enthusiasm, spirit, and concern that, however much I want to force myself, it is impossible to

ask. Whereas in the case of other things that His Majesty is going to do, I find I can pray for them often, and with great insistence. Even when I don't have this concern myself, it seems to be put before me.

6. The difference between these two kinds of petition is so great I don't know how to explain it. In the one case I don't cease forcing myself to beg the Lord, even though I may not feel that fervor in myself—although the petitions are close to my heart—that I feel for other petitions. I feel like someone whose tongue is tied; although she may want to speak, she cannot; and if she does speak, she does so in such a way that she finds she isn't understood. In the other case I feel like one who speaks clearly and diligently to someone who is listening very eagerly. In the first case, the petition is made, let us say for now, as it is in vocal prayer; in the other, it is made in sublime contemplation; the Lord so manifests Himself that He makes it known He hears us and is glad we ask this of Him and to grant us the favor. May He be blessed forever who gives so much, and to whom I give so little. For what does one do, my Lord, who doesn't get rid of everything for You? How I fail, how I fail—and I could say it a thousand times—to get rid of everything for You! There's no reason on this account to want to live (although there are other reasons), because I don't live in conformity with what I owe You. How many imperfections I see in myself! What laxity in serving You! Indeed I think sometimes I would like to be without consciousness in order not to know so much evil about myself. May He who is able provide the remedy.

7. While I was in the house of that lady I mentioned,⁶ where it was necessary to be careful and ever reflect upon the vanity all the things of life bear with them (for I was very much esteemed and praised and was offered many things to which I could have truly become attached, had I looked out for myself), He who has true vision watched so as not to let me out of His hand. . . .⁷

8. Now that I mention "true vision" I recall the great trials persons whom God has brought to knowledge of the truth suffer in dealing with these earthly things, where so much is covered up, as the Lord once told me—for many of the things I write

about here do not come from my own head, but my heavenly Master tells them to me. The things I designate with the words "this I understood" or "the Lord said this to me" cause me great scrupulosity if I leave out even as much as a syllable. Hence if I don't recall everything exactly, I put it down as coming from myself; or also, some things are from me. I don't call mine what is good, for I already know that there is nothing good in me but what the Lord has given me without my meriting it. But when I say "coming from me," I mean not being made known to me through a revelation.

9. But alas, my God, how true it is that even in spiritual matters we often want to understand things through our own very twisted opinion of the truth, just as we also do in worldly things. We think we must measure our progress by the years in which we have practiced prayer and, it even seems, put a measure on Him who gives His gifts without any measure, when He so desires. He can give more to one in half a year than to another in many years! This is something I have seen so clearly in many persons that I'm amazed how we can even stop to consider it.

10. I firmly believe that anyone who has talent in discerning spirits and to whom the Lord may have given true humility will not be deceived in this matter. For such a person judges by the good effects, resolutions, and love; and the Lord gives light that these may be recognized. As a result this person looks at the improvement and progress of souls and not at their age. One person in half a year can gain more than another can in twenty years because, as I say, the Lord gives to whomever He wants and also to whoever is better disposed. I now see some young girls entering this house;⁸ because God has touched them and given them a little light and love (I mean that after a short while He gives them some gift), they do not wait for Him, or suffer any obstacle in their path, or even remember to eat. On account of Him who they know loves them, they close themselves up forever in a house without income, like someone who doesn't esteem her life. They give up everything; neither do they want their own will, not does it even occur to them that they could be unhappy with such enclosure and austerity: together they all offer themselves as a sacrifice to God.

11. How willingly in this regard I give them the advantage over me; I should walk with shame before God! What His Majesty didn't succeed in doing with me in such a great number of years, from the time I began to practice prayer and He began to grant me favors, He has succeeded in doing with them in three months—with some even three days—after granting them much less than He did me, although He pays them well. Surely they are not unhappy about what they have done for Him.

12. By noting this, I would like us to recall the many years that have passed since we made profession and began to practice prayer, and not to disturb those who in a short time make more progress, causing them to turn back in order to walk at our pace; nor would I want to make those who fly like eagles with the favors God grants them to advance like fettered chickens. But let us fix our eyes on His Majesty; if we see they are humble, give them the rein; the Lord who grants them so many favors will not let them fall from the precipice. They themselves trust in God, for in this way the truth they know through faith benefits them. And is it that we do not trust them but want to measure them by our own measure conformed to our lowly spirits? Not so; but if we don't attain to the wonderful good effects and resolutions of their experience, let us humble ourselves and not condemn them; without experience one can misunderstand these things. In thinking that we are looking after their progress, we are avoiding and losing this occasion for progress ourselves. For the Lord places this occasion before us so as to humble us and that we might understand what we lack and how much closer to God and more detached these souls must be than are ours since His Majesty draws so close to them.

13. I don't mean, nor would I want it to be thought that I mean, anything else than that I would prefer a prayer practiced for only a short time and that produced marvelous effects that can be seen at once; for it is impossible without a powerful love to give up everything only so as to please God. Such prayer is better than prayer practiced for many years in which one never, either in the beginning or afterward, succeeds in resolving to do anything at all for God—except some tiny little things, like grains of salt, that have no weight or bulk and could be carried

in a sparrow's beak, and that we do not consider to be a mortification or a great effect of prayer. It's a pity we even know about some things we do for the Lord and pay attention to them, even though they be many.

I'm this way, and I forget the favors at every step. I do not say that His Majesty, being so good, will not highly regard these little deeds we perform. But I wouldn't want to pay attention to them or observe that I'm doing them, since they are nothing. Yet pardon me, my Lord, and don't blame me for having to console myself with something, for I don't serve You in anything. If I served You in great matters, I wouldn't be paying attention to trifles. Blessed are those persons who serve You with great deeds! If it were taken into account that I envy them and desire these deeds, I wouldn't be very far behind in pleasing You; but I'm not worth anything, my Lord. Give me worth Yourself since You love me so much.

14. On one of these days, when a brief from Rome was successfully obtained so that this monastery could exist without an income,⁹ it happened that I thought the accomplishment had cost me some difficulty. While being consoled in finding that the matter was ended and thinking of the trials I had experienced and praising the Lord for His having desired to make some use of me, I began to consider the things I had undergone. As a matter of fact, in each thing I did that seemed to be worth something, I found many faults and imperfections, and sometimes a lack of courage, and often little faith. For until the present moment, when I see the fulfillment of everything the Lord told me in regard to this house, I never succeeded in definitely believing that what the Lord told me would come about; but neither could I doubt that it would. It happened that often on the one hand the fulfillment seemed to me impossible, while on the other hand I couldn't doubt it—I mean believe it would not come about. Finally, I discovered that the Lord for His part did everything good and that I did the bad; so I stopped thinking about the matter. I didn't want to recall it and thereby stumble upon so many of my faults. May He be blessed who when He so desires draws good out of everything, amen.

15. Well, I say that it is dangerous to count the number of

years in which you have practiced prayer; even though humility may be present, I think there can remain a kind of feeling that you deserve something for the service. I don't mean that you don't gain merit and that you will not be well paid. But I consider it certain that spiritual persons who think that they deserve these delights of spirit for the many years they have practiced prayer will not ascend to the summit of the spiritual life. Isn't it enough that God take them by the hand to keep them from committing the offenses they did before they practiced prayer, without their wanting, so to speak, to sue God for money? I don't think it shows profound humility. Indeed, it could; but I consider it audacity. I don't think that I, who have little humility, would ever have dared to do so. Now it might be that since I have never served, I have never asked; perhaps if I had served, I would desire more than anyone that the Lord repay me.

16. I don't say that a soul will not grow or that God will not give this increase if its prayer has been humble, but I say that those years of service should be forgotten; for in comparison with one drop of the blood the Lord shed for us, everything we do is disgusting. And if in serving more we become more indebted, what is this we seek? For if we pay one maravedi of the debt, we are given a thousand ducats in return. Let us out of love for God set aside these judgments because they belong to Him. These comparisons are always bad, even in earthly matters; what must they amount to in matters that only God knows about? And His Majesty showed it well when He paid as much to the workers who came last as to those who came first.¹⁰

17. I've returned so often to write these three folios and so many days have passed—for I have had and now have, as I said, little time—¹¹ that I had forgotten what I began to say, which was about this vision. I saw myself standing alone in prayer in a large field; surrounding me were many different types of people. All of them I think held weapons in their hands so as to harm me: some held spears; others, swords; others, daggers; and others, very long rapiers. In sum, I couldn't escape on any side without putting myself in danger of death; I was alone without finding a person to take my part. While my spirit was in this affliction, not knowing what to do, I lifted my eyes to heaven

and saw Christ, not in heaven but quite far above me in the sky; He was holding out His hand toward me, and from there He protected me in such a way that I had no fear of all the people, nor could they harm me even though they wanted to.

18. This vision seems fruitless, but it greatly benefited me because I was given an understanding of its meaning. A little afterward I found myself almost in the midst of that battery, and I knew that the vision was a picture of the world; everything in the world, it seems, bears arms so as to injure the afflicted soul. I'm not referring to those who don't serve God well, or to honors, property, delights, and other similar things; for it is clear that when you least expect you are ensnared—in any event, all these things strive to ensnare. But I'm referring to friends, relatives, and, what frightens me most, very good persons. I afterward found myself so oppressed by them all, while they thought they were doing good, that I didn't know how to defend myself or what to do.

19. Oh, God help me! Were I to speak of the different kinds of trials I experienced at this time, even after those I described before, how good would be the counsel to despise everything completely! It was the greatest persecution, it seems to me, of those I had undergone. I say that sometimes I found myself so constricted on every side that the only remedy I discovered was to raise my eyes to heaven and call upon God. I remembered well what I had seen in that vision. It profited me a great deal so that I didn't trust very much in anyone, for there is no stable help but in God. The Lord always sent me in these great trials a person on His side to lend me a hand, as He showed me in this vision, who was unattached to anything other than pleasing the Lord. He did this to sustain the little amount of virtue I had to desiring to serve Him. May You, Lord, be blessed forever!

20. Once while very disturbed and troubled, unable to recollect myself and in battle and strife with my own thoughts which were turning to imperfect matters—finding that I didn't have the detachment I usually do—I feared, since I saw I was so wretched, that the favors the Lord had granted me had been illusions. I experienced, in sum, a great darkness of soul. While I was in

this affliction, the Lord began to speak to me. He told me not to be anxious, that in seeing myself in this condition I would understand how miserable I'd be if He withdrew from me, and that there is no security while we live in this flesh. He made me understand how worthwhile this war and strife is that merits such a reward (it seemed to me the Lord took pity on those who live in the world), that I should not think He had forgotten me, that He would never abandon me, but that it was necessary I do what I could. The Lord told me this with comforting compassion, and He said other things by which He showed me His great favor and which there is no reason for me to tell.¹²

21. His Majesty, showing me deep love, often speaks these words to me: "Now you are Mine, and I am yours." The words I always have the custom of saying, and I think I say them truthfully, are: "What do I care about myself, Lord, when I care only about You?" These words and gifts make me so extraordinarily embarrassed when I recall what I am (as I have often said,¹³ I think, and now sometimes tell my confessor) that more courage is necessary to receive these favors than to undergo the severest trials. When they take place, I am almost completely forgetful of my deeds and am shown that I am wretched. This happens without any discursive activity of the intellect, for it also seems to me at times supernatural.

22. On occasion there come over me such ardent desires to receive Communion that I don't think they could be exaggerated. They came upon me one morning when it was raining so hard it seemed impossible to leave the house. When I was outside the house, I was already so outside myself with the desire for Communion that even should lances have been held to my heart I think I'd have gone into their midst; how much more into the midst of rain. When I reached the church a great rapture came upon me. It seemed to me I saw the heavens open, not just an entrance as I have seen before. A throne was shown to me, which at other times I've told your Reverence I've seen;¹⁴ and above it another throne where the Divinity was. Although I didn't see the Divinity, I knew with an indescribable knowledge that It was there. Seemingly some animals were holding up the throne. I think I have heard a description of these animals. I wondered

if they were the Evangelists.¹⁵ But what the throne was like or who was on it, I didn't see—only a great multitude of angels. They seemed to me to be incomparably more beautiful than those I had seen in heaven. I wondered if they were seraphim or cherubim because they were very different in glory. It seemed they were afire; the difference is great, as I've said.¹⁶ And the glory I then experienced in myself cannot be put in writing or described, nor could anyone who hadn't experienced it imagine what it is like. I understood that everything desirable is brought together there, yet I didn't see anything. I was told, I don't know by whom, that what I could do there was understand that I couldn't understand anything and reflect upon how in comparison with that glory everything else was nothing at all. As a consequence, my soul was afterward ashamed to see that it could be detained by any created thing; how much more if it were to become attached to it, for all things seemed to me like an ant-hill.

23. I was present at Mass and received Communion, but I don't know how it was possible. It seemed to me only a short time had passed. I was amazed when the clock struck and I found I had been in that rapture and glory for two hours. It seems this fire comes from above, from God's true love; for however much I may desire and seek and strive after it, I play no part in obtaining even a spark of it, save when His Majesty so desires, as I have often said.¹⁷ I was amazed afterward how this fire, when one is united to it, seems to consume the old man with his faults and lukewarmness and misery. Like the phoenix—according to what I have read—¹⁸ which after it is burned rises again from the same ashes, so afterward the soul becomes another, with different desires and great fortitude. It doesn't seem to be what it was before, but begins to walk on the Lord's path with new purity. While I was beseeching His Majesty that so it would be and that I would begin again to serve Him, He told me: "You have made a good comparison; see that you don't forget to strive always for improvement."

24. Once having the same doubt I just mentioned before,¹⁹ whether these visions were from God, the Lord appeared to me and said to me severely: "O children of the earth! How long will you be hard of heart?"²⁰ He said that I should examine one

thing in myself: whether I was totally surrendered to Him, or not; that if I was, I should believe He would not let me go astray. I became very distressed by that exclamation. In a most tender and comforting way He returned to say I shouldn't be distressed; that He already knew that for my part I wouldn't fail to dedicate myself entirely to His service; that everything I wanted would be done (and so what I then begged for was done); that I should behold the love for Him that was growing in me each day; that from this I could see that my experiences weren't from the devil; that I shouldn't think God would allow the devil to play such a role in the souls of His servants, or that the devil could give the quietude or clarity of understanding that I experienced. He made me realize that since so many persons, of such quality, told me these visions were from God I would be doing wrong in not believing them.

25. Once while reciting the psalm *Quicumque vult*²¹ I was given so clear an understanding of how there is only one God and three Persons that I was amazed and greatly consoled. It was extraordinarily beneficial to me to have further knowledge of the grandeurs of God and of His marvels. When I think about or discuss the Blessed Trinity, it seems I understand how it is possible; and this gives me great happiness.

26. One day, the feast of the Assumption of our Lady, Queen of Angels, the Lord desired to grant me the following favor; in a rapture He showed me her ascent to heaven, the happiness and solemnity with which she was received, and the place where she is. I wouldn't be able to describe how this happened. The glory my spirit experienced in seeing so much glory was magnificent. The effects of this favor were great. I was helped in having a deeper desire to undergo difficult trials, and I was left with a longing to serve our Lady since she deserved this so much.

27. While at a college of the Society of Jesus²² and while the Brothers in that house were receiving Communion, I saw a very richly made pallium above their heads. I saw this twice. When other persons were receiving Communion, I didn't see it.

Chapter 40

Continues with the same subject, telling of the great favors the Lord granted her. Good doctrine can be deduced from some of these favors; for, in addition to obeying, her main intention, as she said, has been to write about those favors that will be of benefit to souls. With this chapter the written account of her life comes to an end. May it be for the glory of the Lord, amen.

ONCE WHILE IN PRAYER the delight I felt within me was so great that, as someone who is unworthy of such good, I began to think about how I merited rather to be in that place I had seen was reserved for me in hell. For, as I said,¹ I never forget the situation I there found myself in. With this reflection my soul began to grow more enkindled and there came upon me a spiritual rapture that I don't know how to describe. It seemed I was carried into and filled with that majesty I at other times understood. Within this majesty I was given knowledge of a truth that is the fulfillment of all truths. I don't know how to explain this because I didn't see anything. I was told without seeing anyone, but I clearly understood that it was Truth itself telling me: "This is no small thing I do for you, because it is one of the things for which you owe Me a great deal; for all the harm that comes to the world comes from its not knowing the truths of Scripture in clarity and truth; not one iota of Scripture will fall short."² To me it seemed I had always believed this, and that all the faithful believed it. He told me: "Alas, daughter, how few there are who truthfully love me! For if they loved me, I would reveal to them my secrets. Do you know what it is to love Me truthfully? It is to understand that everything that is displeasing to me is a lie. By the beneficial effects this understanding will cause in your soul you shall see clearly what you now do not understand."

2. And this I have afterward come to realize, may the Lord be praised. For ever since then, that which I observe as not directed toward the service of God seems to me to be such vanity and deception that I wouldn't know how to describe the manner in which I understand this. Nor would I know how to describe the grief caused me by those who I see are in darkness about

this truth, or, along with this, how to describe many other advantages that I shall mention here. The Lord spoke to me a particular word in this rapture by which He showed me extraordinary favor. I don't know how this came about, because I didn't see anything; but I was left with a feeling of indescribable good fortune and with the greatest and most authentic fortitude in using all my strength to carry out the least part of Sacred Scripture. It seems to me that no obstacle could cross my path that I wouldn't overcome.³

3. From this divine Truth, which showed itself to me, there was engraved upon me, without my knowing how or what, a truth that gives me a new reverence toward God; for it gives knowledge of His majesty and power in an indescribable way: I know that this majesty and power are something great. There was left in me a keen desire to speak only those things that are very true, that reach beyond what is dealt with here in the world; and so I began to experience the pain of living in the world. This experience left me feeling great tenderness, consolation, and humility. I think that, without my understanding how, the Lord gave me very much with this favor. I felt no suspicion that it was an illusion. I didn't see anything, but I understood the great blessing there is in not paying attention to what doesn't bring us closer to God. Thus I understood that the Lord gave me understanding of what Truth itself is.⁴

4. All I have mentioned I have come to know sometimes through locutions, at other times without them. Some things I understood more clearly than I understand what is told me in words. I understood extraordinary truths about this Truth, more than if many learned men had taught me. I don't think they could ever have impressed truth upon me in this way or made me understand so clearly the vanity of this world.

This truth, which I say was given to my understanding, is in itself truth, and it is without beginning or end; all other truths depend upon this truth, just as all other loves depend upon this love, and all other grandeurs upon this grandeur—although this statement is obscure if compared to the clear understanding the Lord wanted me to have. And what power this Majesty appears to have since in so short a time He leaves such an abundant in-

crease and things so marvelous impressed upon the soul! O my Grandeur and Majesty! What are You doing, my all-powerful Lord? Look upon whom You bestow such sovereign favors! Don't You recall that this soul has been an abyss of lies and a sea of vanities, and all through my own fault? For even though You gave me the natural temperament to abhor the lie, I myself in dealing with many things have lied. How do You bear it, my God? How is such great consolation and favor compatible with one who so poorly deserves this from You?

5. Once while I was reciting with all the Sisters the hours of the Divine Office, my soul suddenly became recollected; and it seemed to me to be like a brightly polished mirror, without any part on the back or sides or top or bottom that wasn't totally clear. In its center Christ, our Lord, was shown to me, in the way I usually see Him.⁵ It seemed to me I saw Him clearly in every part of my soul, as though in a mirror. And this mirror also—I don't know how to explain it—was completely engraved upon the Lord Himself by means of a very loving communication I wouldn't know how to describe. I know that this vision is very beneficial to me each time I remember it, especially after receiving Communion. I was given understanding of what it is for a soul to be in mortal sin. It amounts to clouding this mirror with mist and leaving it black; and thus this Lord cannot be revealed or seen, even though He is always present giving us being.⁶ And I understood that heresies amount to breaking the mirror; which is much worse than its being darkened. The way in which this is seen is very different from telling about it because it can be poorly described. But it brought me much profit and caused me grief for the times in which through my sins I so darkened my soul that I couldn't see this Lord.

6. I think this vision is advantageous to recollected persons, in teaching them to consider the Lord as very deep within their souls; such a thought is much more alluring and fruitful than thinking of Him as outside oneself, as I mentioned at other times.⁷ And some books on prayer tell about where one must seek God. Particularly, the glorious St. Augustine speaks about this for neither in the market place nor in pleasures nor anywhere else that he sought God did he find Him as he did when he sought

Him within himself.⁸ Within oneself, very clearly, is the best place to look; and it's not necessary to go to heaven, nor any further than our own selves; for to do so is to tire the spirit and distract the soul, without gaining as much fruit.

7. There is one thing I want to advise here, in case someone should experience it. It happens in deep rapture that after the time is past in which the soul is in union (for when it is in union the faculties are totally absorbed, and this doesn't last long, as I said,)⁹ the soul remains recollected and cannot yet return to itself in exterior things; but the two faculties, the memory and the intellect, are left almost delirious and mad. This I say happens sometimes, especially in the beginning. I think it proceeds from the fact that our natural weakness cannot bear such spiritual force, and the imagination is weakened. I know that it happens to some persons. I would consider it advisable that they force themselves to stop their prayer at that time and recover at another time what they miss; provided they do not try to regain this all at once, because this state could end up being harmful. And there is experience of such harm and of how fitting it is to consider what our health is capable of.

8. However, experience and a spiritual master are necessary because once the soul has reached those boundaries many things occur about which it is necessary to have someone to talk to. If after one has looked for someone, no one is found, the Lord will not fail; He hasn't failed me in spite of what I am. I believe there are few who have arrived at the experience of so many things. If there isn't anyone with experience, there is no remedy at all; because lacking experience, the master will only disturb and afflict the soul. But the Lord will also take this into account. Hence it is necessary, especially in the case of women, to discuss this with one's confessor, and that he be a qualified one. I've said all this before, as well as, perhaps, all that I'm now saying (for I don't recall well); and I say it now because I find it is very important. There are many more women than men to whom the Lord grants these favors. This I heard from the saintly Friar Peter of Alcántara — and I too have observed it — who said that women make much more progress along this path than men do. He gave excellent reasons for this, all in favor of women; but

there's no need to mention them here.

9. Once while in prayer I was shown quickly, without my seeing any form—but it was a totally clear representation—how all things are seen in God and how He holds them all in Himself. How to put this in writing, I don't know. But it was deeply impressed upon my soul, and it is one of the great favors the Lord has granted me and one of those that have most embarrassed me and made me ashamed when I recalled the sins I committed. I believe that had the Lord been pleased that I should have seen this before and that those who offend Him should have seen it, neither I nor they would have had the heart or dared to offend Him. I say "it seemed to me," without being able to affirm that I saw anything; but something must have been seen since I shall be able to draw a comparison.¹⁰ But the vision is seen in so subtle and delicate a manner that the intellect probably doesn't attain to it; or I don't know how to explain these visions that don't seem to be imaginative. Some of them must have something of the imaginative. But since the faculties are in rapture they are unable afterward to describe how the Lord is represented there and how He desires that they enjoy Him.

10. Let us say, to make the comparison, that the Divinity is like a very clear diamond, much greater than all the world; or like a mirror, as I said referring to the soul in that other vision,¹¹ except that it is a mirror in so sublime a way that I wouldn't know how to exaggerate this. And we could say that everything we do is visible in this diamond since it is of such a kind that it contains all things within itself; there is nothing that escapes its magnitude. It was a frightening experience for me to see in so short a time so many things joined together in this diamond, and it is most saddening, each time I recall, to see appearing in that pure brilliance things as ugly as were my sins. It happens that whenever I recall this, I fail to know how I can bear it; as a result I am then left with such shame that I don't think I know where to hide. Oh, who could explain this to those who commit very indecent and ugly sins, that they might recall that these sins are not hidden and that God is rightly aware of them since they take place squarely in the presence of the Majesty? And we act so disrespectfully in front of Him! I saw how

truly hell is deserved through only one mortal sin because one cannot understand how dreadfully serious it is to commit this sin before such awesome Majesty and how far from what He is are things of this sort. So His mercy is seen more clearly since even when we understand all this He bears with us.

11. It made me reflect that if something like this so frightens the soul, what will the day of judgment be like when this Majesty will be shown to us clearly and we shall see the offenses we have committed? Oh, God help me, what blindness this is that I have borne! Many times I have been frightened over this vision of what I have written. Your Reverence should not be surprised about it, but rather about how I can go on living after seeing these things and then looking at myself. May He be blessed forever who has put up with so much from me!

12. Once while I was in prayer with deep recollection, delight, and quiet, it seemed to me I was surrounded by angels and very close to God. I began to beseech His Majesty for the Church. A revelation was given me of the great good that would be done by a religious order in the latter times and of the fortitude with which its members would sustain the faith.¹²

13. Once while I was praying near the Blessed Sacrament, a saint appeared to me whose order was somewhat fallen. He held in his hands a great book. He opened it and told me to read some large and very legible letters. This is what they said. "In the time to come this order will flourish; it will have many martyrs."

14. At another time while I was at Matins in the choir, there were shown or represented to me six or seven members—it seems there were that many—of the same order, holding swords in their hands. I think this meant that they will defend the faith. For at another time while I was in prayer, my spirit was carried off to where it seemed to be in a large field in which many were in combat, and those belonging to this order were fighting with great fervor. Their faces were beautiful and very much aglow. They conquered many, throwing them to the ground; others, they killed. It seemed to me this battle was against the heretics.

15. I sometimes saw this glorious saint, and he told me a few things and thanked me for praying for his order and promised

to recommend me to the Lord. I'm not naming the orders (if the Lord were pleased that they be known, He would declare them), lest others be offended. But each order, or, rather, each member must strive that through his instrumentality the Lord might make his order so prosperous that it will be of service to God in the extreme need the Church is now in. Happy the lives lost for such a purpose!

16. A person once asked me to beg God to let him know if it would be to the Lord's service for him to accept a bishopric. The Lord told me after I received Communion: "When he understands in all truthfulness and clarity that real lordship consists in possessing nothing, then he will be able to accept it."¹³ With these words He indicated that anyone who is about to receive a prelacy must be far from desiring or wanting it, or at least from striving after it.

17. The Lord granted and continues ordinarily to grant these favors, and many others, to this sinner. It doesn't seem to me necessary to mention these others, since from what was said my soul can be understood as can also the spirit the Lord has given me. May He be blessed forever who has taken such care of me.

18. Once in comforting me He told me with much love that I shouldn't be anxious, that in this life we cannot always be in a stable condition, that sometimes the soul will experience fervor and at other times be without it, that sometimes it will have disturbances and at other times have quiet, and again temptations; but that it should hope in Him and not be afraid.

19. One day I was wondering if it was an attachment for me to find satisfaction in being with persons with whom I discuss my soul and whom I love, or with those who I see are great servants of God since it consoled me to be with them. The Lord told me that if a sick person who was in danger of death thought a doctor was bringing about a cure, that sick person wouldn't be virtuous for failing to thank and love the doctor; that if it hadn't been for these persons what would I have done; that conversation with good persons is not harmful, but that my words should always be well weighed and holy, and that I shouldn't fail to converse with them; that doing so is beneficial rather than harmful. This consoled me greatly because sometimes, since con-

versing with them seemed to me to be an attachment, I didn't want to talk to them at all.

Always in all matters this Lord counseled me even to the point of telling me how I should behave with the weak and with certain persons. Never does he neglect me.

20. Sometimes I worry because I see I do so little in His service and that I must necessarily take time for a body as weak and wretched as mine, more than I would want. Once I was in prayer, and the hour for going to bed came; I was feeling many pains and had to induce the usual vomiting.¹⁴ Since I saw I was so bound to myself and that my spirit on the other hand wanted more time, I got so wearied I began to weep freely and grow distressed. (This has happened not only once but, as I say, often.) It seems to me I became angry with myself in such a way that I then truly hated myself. But usually I know I don't hold myself in abhorrence, nor do I fail to do what I see is necessary for myself. And may it please the Lord that I do not care for myself more than is necessary, as sometimes I'm afraid I do. This time of which I'm speaking, the Lord appeared to me and greatly comforted me and told me I should suffer and do these things for love of Him because they were now necessary for my life. So I think I was never afflicted afterward, because I'm determined to serve this Lord and my comforter with all my strength; even though He allowed me to suffer a little, He consoled me in such a way that I don't do anything in desiring trials. So now it seems to me there is no other reason for living than to suffer trials, and this is what I most willingly beg of God. Sometimes I say earnestly to Him; "Lord, either to die or to suffer; I don't ask anything else for myself." I am consoled to hear the clock strike, for at the passing away of that hour of life it seems to me I am drawing a little closer to the vision of God.

21. At other times I am in such a condition that I neither feel like living nor have any mind to die, but I experience a lukewarmness and darkness in everything, with many trials, as I've said I often do.¹⁵ And although the Lord desired that these favors He grants me be publicly known, it has been a comfort to me that they have not been made known through any fault of mine. His Majesty told me some years ago that so it must

be, for I was very worried. And up to the present time I have suffered no small amount, as your Reverence knows, because each one gives them their own interpretation. I took extreme care not to tell anyone but my confessors or persons who, I learned from these confessors, knew about them. And I did this not out of humility but because, as I said,¹⁶ it is even painful for me to tell my confessors. Now, glory to God (even though many criticize me, and with true zeal, and others are afraid to talk to me or even hear my confession, and others say numerous things against me), I am bothered very little by it all since I understand that by this means the Lord has desired to provide a cure for many souls (because I have seen it clearly and recall how much the Lord will suffer for only one soul). I don't know if this public knowledge of these favors is partly the reason His Majesty placed me in this little corner so enclosed,¹⁷ where, according to what I thought, I would, as one dead, no longer be remembered. But things haven't turned out quite as I had wanted, for I am forced to speak to some persons. Yet since I'm not where I can be seen, it seems the Lord has brought me to a refuge which I hope, in His Majesty, will be safe.

22. Since I am among a few holy companions and am not in the world, I observe as though from up high and am really little bothered by what they say or know about me. Moreover, I would like some soul to profit a little by all that can be said about me. Since I have been living in this house, the Lord has been pleased that all my desires converge upon this one desire. And He has given me a kind of sleep in life, or it almost always seems to me that I am dreaming what I see. I am aware in myself of neither happiness nor pain, however great. If certain things do give me either of these, the happiness or pain passes so quickly I marvel, and the feeling left me is that it was like a dream. This is the complete truth; for even though afterward I may want to rejoice over that happiness or be sad about that pain, it is not in my power to do so; just as a prudent person is unable to delight in or grieve over a dream that was had. The Lord has now awakened my soul from that which, because I was not mortified or dead to the things of the world, caused me such feelings; and His Majesty does not want my soul to become blind again.

23. This is the way in which I now live, my Lord and Father.¹⁸ May your Reverence beg God that He either take me to Himself or show me how to serve Him. May it please His Majesty that what is here written be of some benefit to your Reverence, for it was difficult to do on account of the small amount of time I had. But the difficulty will have proved well worthwhile if I have managed to say something that may bring someone to praise the Lord, even if only once; with this I would feel repaid even though your Reverence then burns it.

24. I wouldn't want you to do that until the three persons¹⁹ known by your Reverence have seen it, since they are and have been my confessors. If this account of my life is badly done, it will be a good thing if they lose their high opinion of me; if it is done well, they are good and learned men, and I know they will see where it comes from and praise Him who told it through me.

May His Majesty always keep your Reverence in His hands and make you so great a saint that with your spirit and light you may illumine this miserable woman who has little humility and is very bold in having dared to undertake the task of writing things so sublime. May it please the Lord that I did not err in doing so since my intention and desire was to do what was right and to obey, and that through me He might receive some praise, which is what I have been beseeching Him for many years. Since I do not have the deeds that praise Him, I have dared to recount this dissipated life of mine, although I haven't spent any more care or time on this account than was necessary to put it in writing and record as clearly and truthfully as I could what has taken place in me.

May it please the Lord, since He is powerful and can hear me if He wants, that I might succeed in doing His will in everything. May his Majesty not allow this soul to be lost, which, with so many artifices, in so many ways, and so often, He has rescued from hell and brought to Himself. Amen.

IHS

THE HOLY SPIRIT BE ALWAYS with your Reverence, amen.

It wouldn't be wrong for me to recommend earnestly the following service to your Reverence:¹ that you feel the obligation of taking great care to pray to our Lord for me. For I certainly must have the right to ask this of you from what I have undergone in writing about myself and calling to mind so many of my miseries; although I can truthfully say it was more difficult for me to write about the favors His Majesty granted me than about my offenses against Him.

2. I did what your Reverence commanded me and enlarged upon the material.² I did this on the condition that you do what you promised by tearing up what appears to you to be bad. I hadn't finished reading it after the writing was done when you sent for it. It could be that some of the things are poorly explained and others put down twice, for I had so little time I couldn't read over what I wrote. I ask your Reverence to correct it and have it transcribed if it is to be brought to the Father Master Avila,³ for it could happen that someone might recognize my handwriting. I urgently desire that he be asked for his opinion about it since this was my intention in beginning to write. If it seems to him I am walking on a good path, I shall be very consoled; then nothing else would remain for me than to do what lies within my power. Nevertheless, do what you think best and remember you are obliged to one who has so entrusted her soul to you.

3. I shall recommend your Reverence's soul to our Lord for the rest of my life. So do me the favor of hurrying to serve His Majesty; for you will see, from what is written here, how well one is occupied when one gives oneself entirely—as your Reverence has begun to do—to Him who so immeasurably gives

Himself to us.

4. May He be blessed forever! I hope in His mercy that your Reverence and I will see each other there where we shall behold more clearly the great things He has done for us, and praise Him forever and ever, amen.

This book was finished in June, 1562.

Spiritual Testimonies

SPIRITUAL TESTIMONIES

INTRODUCTION

The *Life* of St. Teresa covers, almost exactly, her first fifty years. In our introductions to later volumes, within the context of her other writings, more information will be given about Teresa's life, interior and exterior, as it progressed after 1565. In this volume we are including a collection of other written reports left by Teresa about her spiritual experiences. Besides the six longer accounts of her state of soul, there are in this group numerous shorter reports and fragments in which she usually describes some particular grace or counsel given her by the Lord. It would seem from a statement made by María de San José and from testimony 24 that these shorter accounts were written down at our Lord's command.

Three of the longer accounts (testimonies 1-3) were composed by Teresa for her confessors before she completed her *Life*; the other three were written much later. Of the two written from Seville in 1576 for Rodrigo Alvarez, S.J., one (testimony 58) is a reply to an investigation by the Inquisition. The final long account was destined for a former confessor, the bishop of Osma, and written in 1581, the year prior to that in which Teresa died. These lengthier accounts of her spiritual state of soul provide an often neglected rich source for students of the mystical life. It is particularly enlightening to note the difference between her spiritual state as manifested in the report of 1560 and that shown in the report of 1581. There are also some excellent descriptions of mystical prayer and, in testimony 59, an interesting summary of its stages.

The writings in this collection taken as a whole have two common characteristics: a thematic unity, since all of them consist of affirmations about Teresa's own spiritual life; and a

chronological discontinuity, for they were written at different times.

No consensus exists with respect to the place this collection should occupy in the Teresian corpus. If one follows a chronological order, the collection has to be divided up and the various accounts put in different places throughout Teresa's writings. Doing so prejudices the value the group of writings has as a collection and as an important complement to the *Life*.

Some editors, on the other hand, though keeping the accounts together, have tried to follow a thematic order, dividing the group into two sections: one, under the title of *Relations*, which comprises the longer accounts; the other, under the title of *Favors of God*, which comprises the shorter accounts which deal with instances of particular graces more than with Teresa's spiritual state in general.

In this new translation we have opted for keeping these writings together under the general title of *Spiritual Testimonies* and for arranging them in chronological order rather than thematic, placing them in this first volume after the *Life*. These testimonies have been compared to X-rays of Teresa's soul, and, thematically, are indeed a complement to the *Book of Her Life*. Her *Life* contains accounts of her state of soul as well as descriptions of many of the favors the Lord granted her up to the time of the completion of the book in 1565. The three first accounts could serve as a kind of foreword to the *Life*, and all the others would of necessity be a kind of epilogue since they deal with facts or experiences occurring after the book was finished. Since the word "relations" used in the title of former English translations is ambiguous, the general title *Spiritual Testimonies*, though new, seems more appropriate. These writings, as in the case of the *Life*, do indeed have the value of being testimonies to Teresa's experience of God and of His action within her.

We have followed the text presented in Fr. Tomás Alvarez's edition (Burgos: *Edit. El Monte Carmelo*, 1971). He bases his text on those autographs still preserved (testimonies 4, 5 [the words spoken by our Lord], 12, 35, and 36) and on the text of Ribera taken for the most part from copies in the Avila codex. The headings at the beginning of each testimony were added by us

as a convenience for the reader.

K.K.

1.

(Avila, 1560)¹**Her spiritual state and manner of prayer**

My present procedure in prayer is as follows: I am seldom able while in prayer to use my intellect in a discursive way, for my soul immediately begins to grow recollected; and it remains in quiet or rapture to the extent that I cannot make any use of the senses. This recollection reaches such a point that if it were not for hearing—and this hearing does not include understanding—none of the senses would be of any avail.

2. It often happens to me that this recollection and elevation of the spirit comes upon me so suddenly I cannot resist; and in a moment I receive the effects and benefits that it carries in its wake. This recollection occurs without my desiring to reflect on the things of God and while I am dealing with other things and thinking that even if I tried to practice prayer I wouldn't be able to because of great dryness, intensified by bodily pains. It happens without my having a vision, or understanding anything, or knowing where I am. But while it seems to me that my soul is getting lost, I see what it gains, so that should I have desired to obtain these blessings myself in the course of a year I don't think it would have been possible to have acquired them.

3. At other times I receive a very intense, consuming impulse for God that I cannot resist. It seems my life is coming to an end, and so this impulse makes me cry out and call to God; and it comes with great frenzy. Sometimes I'm unable to remain seated because of the vomitings from which I suffer;² and this pain comes upon me without my seeking it. It is of such a kind that the soul would never want to be relieved of it as long as it lives. I have longings not to live this apparent life any more. I cannot find any remedy for these longings, since the cure for the desire to see God is death; and I cannot take this cure. Along with this, it seems to my soul that everyone has the greatest consolation except itself and that all find a cure for their trials except itself. This causes such affliction that if the Lord didn't provide a remedy by means of a certain rapture, in which everything is made peaceful and the soul remains in deep quiet and

satisfaction — now beholding something of what it desires, now understanding other things — it would be impossible to get free from that pain.

4. At other times, some desires to serve God come upon me with impulses so strong I don't know how to exaggerate them, and there is also pain in seeing of what little use I am. It seems to me, then, that no trial, neither death, nor martyrdom, nor anything could be offered to me that I wouldn't easily undergo. This, too, occurs without reflection; but in an instant it changes me completely, and I don't know where I get so much strength. It seems to me I would want to cry out and make everyone understand what is gained by not being satisfied with a few things and how much good there is that God will give us if we dispose ourselves for it. I say these desires are of a kind that consume me, for I want what I am unable to procure. It seems to me this body and this state bind me, for they are no good at all for serving God. If I wasn't so bound, I would do very noble deeds insofar as my strength would allow. But I feel such pain in seeing I have no power to serve Him that I cannot exaggerate it. I end up with delight and recollection and consolations from God.

5. At other times, when these anxious longings to serve Him come upon me, I feel I want to do penance; but I am unable. Penance would bring me great relief, and it does bring me relief and joy, although the penances amount to almost nothing on account of the weakness of my body; yet were these desires to remain, I think I would do too much.

6. Sometimes it gives me great pain to have to have dealings with others; it afflicts me so much that it causes me to weep profusely, because all my longing is to be alone. And even though sometimes I do not pray or read, solitude consoles me. Conversation, especially with relatives, seems to me burdensome. I feel as though I am among strangers, except when I am with those to whom I speak about prayer and the soul, for with these persons I am happy and consoled, although sometimes I have enough of them and do not want to see them but want to go where I can be alone; but this latter happens seldom, especially in the case of those to whom I manifest my conscience, for they are always a consolation to me.

7. At other times it gives me great pain to have to eat and sleep and to see that I more than anyone cannot give up these actions. I perform them to serve God, and so I offer them to Him. It seems to me that all time is short and that I don't have enough for prayer, for I never tire of being alone. I always want to have time to read because I have been very fond of reading. I read very little, for in picking up a book I become recollected in my contentment, and so the time for reading passes in prayer. This time amounts to little, for I have many duties; and though they are good, they do not provide me with the satisfaction reading does. So I go about always wanting time, and the awareness that what I want and desire is not granted is that which, I think, makes everything insipid to me.

8. All these desires and those, too, for virtue were given me by our Lord after He gave me this quiet prayer with these raptures; and I found I was so improved that it seems to me I was previously a total loss. These raptures and visions leave in me the benefits I shall here describe. And I say that if I have anything good, it has come from these.

9. There has come upon me a very strong determination not to offend God, not even venially; for I would die a thousand deaths rather than offend Him knowingly. There is the determination not to omit anything I think is more perfect or will render greater service to our Lord when the one who has care for me and directs me says this is so; and even though I may perform such action reluctantly, I wouldn't for any treasure fail to do it. And if I should do the contrary, I don't think I would dare ask our Lord God for anything, or practice prayer, although in all these matters I commit many faults and imperfections.

I obey my confessor, although imperfectly. Yet, once I have understood that he wants something or has given me a command, insofar as I know I wouldn't fail to carry it out; and were I to fail, I would think I was being very much mistaken.

I desire poverty, although imperfectly. Yet, I think that even were I to possess many treasures, I wouldn't keep any special income or any money for myself alone, nor would this matter to me. I would only want to have what's necessary. Still, I feel I'm very much lacking in this virtue. For although I don't desire

any money for myself, I should like to have it so as to give it away, though I don't desire any income or anything for myself.

10. From almost all the visions I've experienced, I've received some benefit, except in those cases where there is deception from the devil. In this I submit to my confessors.

11. When I see something beautiful or rich, like water, fields, flowers, fragrances, music, and so on, it seems to me that I wouldn't want to see or hear these things, so great is the difference between them and what I am accustomed to seeing; thus all desire for such things is taken from me. And as a result I have come to care so little for them that, save for the first stirrings, they make no impression on me and seem like dung.

12. If I speak or have dealings with some secular persons because matters can't be otherwise, and even though the subject may concern prayer, I find that if the conversation is prolonged, just a diversion and unnecessary, I am forcing myself to continue, because such conversation is a severe hardship for me. Amusements that I used to like and things of the world, all annoy me; and I cannot look at them.

13. These desires for loving and serving God and seeing Him, which I mentioned that I have, are not fostered by reflections as they were previously when it seemed to me I was very devout and when I shed many tears. But they come with so excessive an enkindling and fervor that I repeat that if God did not cure me by means of some rapture, in which it seems to me my soul is satisfied, I think my life would soon come to an end.

14. I greatly love those who I see are more advanced and who are determined, detached, and courageous; and they are the ones with whom I would want to converse; it seems they help me. Persons who I see are timid, who I think proceed with great circumspection so that things can be done here below in conformity with reason are oppressive to me and make me cry to God and to His saints, who undertook those things that now frighten us. I feel this, not because I think I am worth anything but because I think God helps those who set out to do much for Him and that He never fails anyone who trusts in Him alone. I should like to find someone who would help me believe this, and not have to worry about what I must eat and wear, but be able to

abandon that to God. It shouldn't be thought that this abandonment to God in necessities means I don't try to procure them, but I mean I don't do so with a concern that makes me worry. Since He has given me this freedom, such abandonment does me good, and I strive to forget myself as much as I can. It doesn't seem a year has yet passed since our Lord has given me this freedom.

15. Insofar as I know, glory to God, there is no reason for me to experience vainglory. For I observe clearly in these things God grants that I don't do anything myself; rather, God gives me a feeling of my miseries. No matter how much thinking I might do, I would never be able to see all the truths I come to know in a moment.

16. For a few days now, it seems to me as if I am speaking of another person when I speak of these things. Before, I was ashamed sometimes that my experiences were known, but now I think I'm no better on account of so many favors but worse, since I profit so little from them. Indeed, I think there hasn't been anyone worse than I in any part of the world. So it seems to me that the virtues of others have much more merit, that I don't do anything but receive favors, and that God will give others all at once what He desires to give me here. I beseech Him not to want to pay me in this life, and so I believe that because I am weak and wretched the Lord has led me by this path.

17. While in prayer, and almost whenever I'm able to reflect a little, I'm unable to ask for rest or to desire it from God, even if I try. For I see that He didn't live but with trials; and I beg Him to give me these, granting me first the grace to suffer them.

18. All these kinds of things that have to do with very sublime perfection it seems are impressed upon me in prayer, so much so that I am amazed to see so many truths and so clearly, for the things of the world appear to me to be nonsense. So I need to be careful by reflecting on what my attitude was previously toward the things of the world, for it seems to me that to grieve over its deaths and trials is foolish, at least if the sorrow or the love of relatives, friends, and so on, lasts a long while. I say that I proceed carefully, reflecting on what I was and what I used to feel.

19. If in some persons I see things that clearly seem to be sins, I cannot come to the conclusion they have offended God. And if I stop somewhat to consider them — which happens hardly or not at all — I never reach that conclusion, although I may have seen the things clearly. It seems to me the care I have about serving God is had by all. In this matter He has granted me a great favor, for I never pause to consider anything evil; because when I afterward recall it, and if I recall it, I always see another virtue in that person. Thus these things never distress me, unless in the case of something that is common, or of heresies which often cause me affliction. And almost as often as I think about them it seems to me that this trial alone is the one that must be felt. I also grieve if I see some persons who used to practice prayer turn back. This grieves me, but not a lot, since I strive not to pause to think about it.

20. I also find improvement in regard to my former vanities, but it is not complete; for I'm not always mortified in this regard, although sometimes, yes.

21. All of this I have said is what ordinarily takes place in my soul insofar as I can understand. I very habitually keep my mind fixed on God; and when I am dealing with other things, without desire on my part — as I say — I am made attentive by I don't know who. I am not always made attentive but only when I'm dealing with some important matter; and this attentiveness to these matters lasts for only a short while and, glory to God, is not continuous.

22. It happens to me on some days — although not often, and the experience lasts about three, four, or five days — that it seems to me that all the good things, fervor, and visions have been taken away; and even taken from my memory, for I don't know, although I may want to, what good there has been in me. Everything seems to have been a dream, at least I'm not able to remember anything. All my bodily ills together afflict me. My intellect disturbs me because I cannot think anything about God, nor do I know what state I'm in. If I read, I don't understand. It seems to me I am full of faults, without any courage for virtue, and that that great courage I usually have dwindles to this: that I'd be unable to resist the least temptation or criticism

from the world. It occurs to me then that I'm good for nothing, that no one could force me to do more than what is ordinary; I feel sad; I feel I've deceived all those who have given me some credit. I should like to hide some place where no one would see me; not solitude for virtue's sake, but out of pusillanimity. It seems to me I'd want to quarrel with everyone who contradicts me. I carry about with me this battle, except that God grants me the favor of not offending Him more than I usually do. Nor do I ask Him to take away this state, but that if it is His will it might remain always, that He keep me in His hands that I might not offend Him; and I conform myself to Him with all my heart. I believe it is an extraordinary favor He grants me that I am not always in this condition.

23. One thing amazes me, that, while I'm in this state, with one word alone of those I'm accustomed to hearing, or one vision, or a little recollection that lasts for the space of a Hail Mary, or in approaching to receive Communion, my soul and body will become very quiet, and my intellect very sound and clear, and I will feel all the fortitude and desires I usually have. I have experienced for more than a half year that at least when I am receiving Communion I noticeably and clearly feel bodily health. Sometimes I feel this by means of raptures, which occasionally last more than three hours. At other times I am greatly improved throughout the whole day. In my opinion this is not a matter of fancy, because I have observed and taken note of it. As a result, when I have this recollection I don't fear any illness. It is true that when I experience the prayer I did before, I do not feel this improvement.

24. All these things I mentioned make me believe these favors are from God. For since I know who I was, that I was walking on the road of perdition, it is certain that in a short while through these experiences my soul became amazed, not knowing where these virtues came from. I didn't know myself; I saw they were something given and not gained through toil. I understand in all clarity and truthfulness, and know I am not deceived, that this has been a means by which God not only brought me to His service but freed me from hell. All of this my confessors to whom I've made my general confessions know.

25. Also, when I meet any person who knows something about me, I want to explain my life to him. For I think it is an honor to me that our Lord be praised, and I don't care anything about the rest. He knows this well, or I am very blind; for there is no honor or life or glory of any good of body or soul that holds me back, nor would I want or desire my own gain, but only His glory. I cannot believe the devil sought out so many blessings to win my soul in order that he might afterward lead it astray, for I don't consider him to be that stupid. Nor can I believe, though on account of my sins I deserve to be deceived, that God would fail to hear so many prayers offered up over a period of two years by so many good people—for I don't do anything else but ask everyone for prayers—in order that He would either let me know if this is for His glory or lead me by another path. I don't believe His divine Majesty would permit these experiences always to continue if they were not from Him.

26. Since I am so wretched, these things and the teachings of so many saints give me assurance when I have these fears about whether or not my experiences are from God. But if when I'm in prayer or on the days in which I am quiet and my thoughts are on God, all the learned men and saints in the world were to join together and torture me with all the torments imaginable, and I wanted to believe them, I wouldn't be able to make myself believe that these things come from the devil; for I cannot. When they wanted to force me to believe that the devil was the cause, I feared, upon seeing who said this, and I thought they must be saying the truth and that I, being what I was, was being deceived. But at the first locution, or experience of recollection, or vision, all they had told me was blotted out; I couldn't do anything but believe God was the cause.³

27. Although I can realize the devil could sometimes meddle—and this is so, as I have seen and said—the effects he causes are different. And whoever has experience will not be deceived, in my opinion. Still, I say that even were I to believe an experience is certainly from God, I wouldn't do anything for any reason if it didn't seem to the one who has the charge over me that it would be for the service of our Lord. I have never thought but that I should obey and not be silent about anything, because

this is good for me.

28. I am ordinarily reprimanded for my faults, and in such a way that it touches me to the very core. And when there is or can be some danger in what I am dealing with, I receive counsels which are very profitable to me. Often my past sins are brought to memory and cause me much grief.

29. I have gone on at great length, but it is certainly true that in regard to the blessings I see in myself when I come out of prayer I have been brief. Afterward I find that I have many imperfections and that I'm useless and very wretched. Perhaps I don't understand the good things, but am deceived; yet, the difference in my life is well-known and makes me reflect on what I have said. In all I've said, I've told what it seems to me I have truly experienced.

These are the perfect qualities I feel the Lord has wrought in me who am so wretched and imperfect. I submit everything to the judgment of your Reverence since you know my entire soul.

2.

(1562, probably Toledo)¹

Detachment and other virtues flowing from God's favors

I think more than a year has passed since I put the above in writing. God has kept me in His hands throughout that time, for I haven't become worse; rather, I see much improvement in what I shall describe. May He be praised for everything.²

2. The visions and revelations have not ceased, but they are much more sublime. The Lord has taught me a mode of prayer by which I find I make more progress and have much greater detachment from the things of this life, with greater courage and freedom. The raptures have increased. At times they come with an impulse and in such a way that without my being able to help myself they are noticeable externally, and they come even while I am in the company of others. They are of such a kind that they cannot be concealed, unless—since I suffer from heart sickness—I let it be thought I'm having some fainting spell. Although I take great care to resist them at the beginning,

sometimes I'm unable.

3. In the matter of poverty, I think God has bestowed on me great favor; for I wouldn't even want to keep what is necessary, unless it were an alms. And so I have a strong desire to be in a place where I live only on alms. It seems to me that when I'm in a place where I'm certain I shall not be lacking food and clothing, I don't fulfill as perfectly the vow, or the counsel of Christ, as when I'm where there will be no income and these things will be sometimes lacking. The blessings gained through true poverty I think are many, and I wouldn't want to lose them. I am often aware of a faith within me so great that I think God cannot fail anyone who serves Him. I know that there never is or will be any time in which His words will fail; for I cannot persuade myself otherwise, nor can I fear. So I feel very sad when they counsel me to have an income; and I turn to God.

4. It seems to me I have much more compassion for the poor than I used to. I feel such great pity and desire to find relief for them that if it were up to me I would give them the clothes off my back. I feel no repugnance whatsoever toward them, toward speaking to or touching them. This I now see is a gift given by God. For even though I used to give alms for love of Him, I didn't have the natural compassion. I feel a very noticeable improvement in this matter.

5. With regard to gossip about me, which is engaged in by many and to my detriment, I also experience improvement. What they say doesn't seem to make any more impression upon me than it would upon a simpleton, and it seems to me sometimes or almost always that they are right. I feel so little grief about it that I still don't think I have anything to offer God. Since I have experience of the great gain that comes to my soul, I rather think these things do me good. And so when I go to prayer, no feelings of hostility toward my critics remain in me. For when I first hear about some criticism, it causes me a little feeling of opposition but not disquiet or disturbance. Rather, when I sometimes see other persons taking pity on me, it happens that I laugh to myself; for all the insults in this life seem to be of such little consequence that there is nothing to feel sorry about. I imagine myself to be going about in a dream, and I see that

upon awakening it will all amount to nothing.

6. Through visions God gives me more intense desires, a greater inclination toward solitude, and much greater detachment, as I have said. For they have made me understand what everything is, and even made me give up friends and relatives, which is the smallest sacrifice; rather, relatives tire me very much. Since it's for the purpose of serving God a little more, I give them up with complete freedom and satisfaction, and so I find peace everywhere.

7. Some advice I received in prayer turned out to be very true for me. Thus from the viewpoint of my being favored by God, I find I'm much improved. But from the viewpoint of my doing my part to serve Him, I am much more wretched; for I've had more consolation, because it has been offered—even though it frequently pains me very much—and done less penance. The great honor that is shown me is often directly contrary to my desire.

3.

(Avila, St. Joseph's, 1563)¹

General account of her state of soul

It is a little more or less than nine months ago that I wrote the above, which is in my own handwriting. Since then, not turning back from the favors God granted me, it seems to me I have received again, insofar as I understand, much greater freedom. Up until now, I thought I needed others, and I had more trust in help from the world. Now, I understand clearly that all this help is like little sticks of dry rosemary and that in being attached to it there is no security; for when some weight of contradiction or criticism comes along, these little sticks break. So I have experience that the true remedy against a fall is to be attached to the cross and trust in Him who placed Himself upon it. I discover that He is the true friend, and through this friendship I find in myself a dominion by which it seems to me I could resist, providing God doesn't fail me, anyone who might be against me.

2. Though now I understand this truth so clearly, I used to

be very fond of being liked. No longer does being liked matter to me; rather, it seems in part to weary me, except in the case of those with whom I discuss my soul or whom I am thinking of helping. For I desire that the former like me so they might bear with me and that the latter do so that they might be more inclined to believe what I tell them about the vanity of everything.

3. In the very severe trials and persecutions and opposition I experienced these past months,² God has given me great courage; and the greater these trials were the greater was the courage, without my growing tired of suffering. Toward persons who spoke evil of me, not only did I feel I bore no harsh feelings but it seemed to me I gained new love for them. I don't know how this came about; it was a blessing given by the hand of the Lord.

4. It is usually my nature that when I desire something I am impulsive in my desire for it. Now, my desires bear with them such quiet that when I see them fulfilled I don't even know if I rejoice. Sorrow and rejoicing, except in matters of prayer, are completely softened in intensity; for I seem like a fool and go around like one for some days.

5. The impulses to do penance that come upon me sometimes, and have come upon me, are great. And if I do penance, I feel it so little on account of that strong desire that sometimes it seems to me—or almost always—that penance is a special favor; although I don't do much since I am very sickly.

6. It is the greatest pain for me sometimes, and now more extreme, to have to go to eat, especially when I'm in prayer. This pain must be great because it makes me weep a good deal and utter words of distress, almost without being aware of it, which I usually do not do. However great the trials I have experienced in this life, I don't recall having said these words. I am not at all like a woman in such matters, for I have a robust spirit.

7. I feel in me the greatest desire, more than usual, that God have persons, especially learned men, who serve Him with complete detachment and who are held back by nothing here below; because I see it is all a mockery. Since I'm aware of the great needs of the Church—for these afflict me so much that it seems

to me silly to feel sorrow about anything else—I don't do anything but pray to God for these persons. For I see that one person who is completely perfect would do more good with a true, fervent love of God than many others would with lukewarmness.

8. In matters of faith, I find, in my opinion, that I have much greater fortitude. It seems to me I would stand up alone against all Lutherans in order to make them understand their error. I greatly grieve over the perdition of so many souls. I see many souls that are advanced, for I know clearly God has desired their progress by means of me. And I recognize that through His goodness my soul increases each day in loving Him more.

9. It seems to me that even were I to try to experience vain-glory I wouldn't be able to, nor do I see how I could think that any of these virtues are mine. It wasn't long ago that for many years I saw myself without any. And now for my part I don't do anything but receive favors, without serving, but as the most useless thing in the world. So it is that I sometimes reflect how all are advancing but me, that I am not worth anything. Certainly this is not humility but truth. And knowing I am so useless, I sometimes become fearful in thinking I may be deceived. So I see clearly that from these revelations and raptures—for I play no part in them nor do I do anything more to receive them than be a blank tablet—there come to me these benefits. This gives me assurance and makes me more calm. I place myself in the arms of God, and I trust in my desires. For these desires, certainly, I understand are to die for Him and lose all repose, come what may.

10. There come days in which I recall an infinite number of times what St. Paul says³—although assuredly not present in me to the degree it was in him—for it seems to me I neither live, nor speak, nor have any desire but that He who strengthens and governs me might live in me. I go about as though outside myself, and so life is the severest pain for me. And the greatest thing I offer God as a principal service to Him is that, since it is so painful for me to live separated from Him, I desire to live, but out of love for Him. I should like to live with great trials and persecutions. Since I am no good for being of any help to anyone, I should like to be good for suffering so that all who

are in the world might receive a little more merit, I mean by a better fulfillment of His will.

11. I haven't experienced any promise in prayer that I haven't seen fulfilled, even though the promise may have come many years previously. There are so many things I see and understand about the grandeurs of God, and of His providence, that almost any time I begin to think about it my intellect fails me, as when one sees things that are far beyond one's ability to understand; and I remain in recollection.

12. God so guards me against offending Him that I am certainly sometimes amazed. For I think I see the great care He takes of me, without my doing hardly anything. I was a sea of sins and iniquities before receiving these favors, and it seemed I was not master of myself in such a way that I could avoid them. The reason I would like this known is that one might have knowledge of the great power of God. May He be praised forever, amen.

13. The account that is not in my own handwriting, the one at the beginning, is the one I gave to my confessor,⁴ and he copied it for himself without subtracting or adding anything. He was a very spiritual man and a theologian with whom I discussed everything about my soul. And he discussed these matters with other learned men, among whom was Father Mancio.⁵ They found that none of my experiences was lacking in conformity with Sacred Scripture. This puts me very much at peace now, although I understand that as long as God leads me by this path I must not trust myself in anything. So I have always consulted others, even though I find it difficult.

Remember that all of this must be kept under the secrecy of confession, as I begged your Reverence.

4.

(Toledo, Nov. 17, 1569)¹

Prophecy of her death

On November seventeenth, during the octave of St. Martin, in the year 1569, I saw with regard to what I know that twelve years had gone by out of the thirty-three, which is the number

of years the Lord lived; so twenty-one still remained.

This happened in Toledo, in the monastery of the glorious St. Joseph of Carmel.

I for you and you for me.

Life.

Twelve were lived for me and not for my will.

5.

(Toledo, 1570)

God's standards are different from the world's

While I was at the monastery in Toledo, some were advising me that I shouldn't give a burying-place to anyone who had not belonged to the nobility. The Lord said to me: "You will grow very foolish, daughter, if you look at the world's laws. Fix your eyes on me, poor and despised by the world. Will the great ones of the world, perhaps, be great before me? Or, are you to be esteemed for lineage or for virtue?"

(This concerned the advice they gave me not to grant a burying-place in Toledo to one who did not belong to the nobility.)¹

6.

(Malagón, Feb. 9, 1570)

Our Lord encourages her to make more foundations and to write their history

Right after I received Communion, on the second day of Lent, in St. Joseph's at Malagón, our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to me in an imaginative vision, as He usually does. While I was gazing upon Him, I saw in place of the crown of thorns a crown of great brilliance on His head, there where the wounds must have been made.

Since I am devoted to this episode of the Passion, I was very much consoled and began to think how great the torment must have been since there were so many wounds; and I became afflicted. The Lord told me that I shouldn't grieve over those wounds, but over the many that were now inflicted upon Him.

I asked Him what I could do as a remedy for this because I was determined to do everything I could. He told me that now was not the time for rest, but that I should hurry to establish these houses; that He found his rest with the souls living in them; that I should accept as many houses as given me since there were many persons who did not serve Him because they had no place for it; that those houses I founded in small towns should be like this one, for, by desire, as much could be merited as in the other houses;¹ that I should strive to put all the houses under the government of a superior; that I should insist that the interior peace not be lost through a concern for bodily sustenance; that He would help us so nothing would be lacking; that the sick especially should be cared for; that a prioress who did not provide for and favor the sick was like Job's friends;² that He made use of the scourge for the good of souls, and that in such an event they should practice patience; and that I should write about the foundation of these houses. I thought of how in regard to the house at Medina I never understood anything in a way that I could write of its foundation.³ He told me that that was all the more reason to write of it since He wanted it to be seen that the Medina foundation had been miraculous. He meant that He alone founded that house, since it had seemed absolutely impossible to found. And as a result I decided to write about the founding of these houses.

7.

(Place unknown; perhaps 1570)
A message to be given

While thinking about what I should say regarding a message the Lord had given me, I didn't understand anything, even though I prayed to Him. And I thought that the message must have come from the devil. He told me that this was not so, that He would advise me when the time came.¹

8.

**(Place unknown; perhaps 1570)
Right intention and detachment**

Once while thinking of how much more purely one lives when withdrawn from business affairs and how when I am involved in them I make poor progress and commit many faults, I heard: "It cannot be helped, daughter; strive to have the right intention and to be detached in all things, and look at Me so that what you do might be done in conformity with what I did."

9.

**(Place unknown; probably 1570)
Public raptures**

Once while wondering why I almost never had raptures in public any more, I heard: "It's not necessary now; you have enough approval for what I intend;¹ let us look at the weakness of the suspicious ones."

10.

**(Salamanca or Alba, 1571)
Surrender and joy in God**

One day while I was anxiously desiring to help the order, the Lord told me: "Do what lies in your power; surrender yourself to me, and do not be disturbed about anything; rejoice in the good that has been given you, for it is very great; my Father takes His delight in you, and the Holy Spirit loves you."

11.

**(Salamanca, February, 1571)
Take courage, the order of the Blessed Virgin will flourish**

One day the Lord told me: "You always desire trials, and on the other hand you refuse them. I dispose things in conformity with what I know is your will and not in conformity with your sensual nature and weakness. Take courage, since you see how

I help you. I have desired that you win this crown. In your days you will see the order of the Blessed Virgin flourish.”

I heard this from the Lord in the middle of February, 1571.¹

12.

(Salamanca, April 15-16, 1571)¹

Transpiercing of the soul

All day yesterday I felt very lonely, for except when I received Communion I benefited little from the fact that it was Easter Sunday. At night when I was with all the Sisters, a little song was sung about how hard it is to endure life without God.² Since I was already afflicted, the effect upon me was so great that my hands began to grow numb. My efforts to resist weren't enough; but just as I am carried out of my senses through the joyous raptures, so in the same way through extreme affliction my soul is suspended, for it is left enraptured. And even to the present day, I haven't understood this. Rather, for some days it seemed to me that I hadn't been experiencing impulses as great as I previously had, and now I think the reason is this one I mentioned. I don't know if it could be that previously the affliction wasn't great enough to make me go out of myself. Since it is so intolerable, and I was still in possession of my senses, it caused me to make loud cries without my being able to avoid doing so. Now, since the pain has increased, it has reached this extreme of transpiercing the soul. I have understood better what our Lady experienced,³ for until today—as I say—I did not understand the nature of this transpiercing. The body remains so torn apart that even what I write today causes suffering, for my hands are as though disjoined and in pain.

2. Your Reverence can tell me when you see me whether pain can cause suspension and whether I experience it as it is or whether I'm being deceived.

3. Even this morning I felt the pain, for while in prayer I experienced a great rapture. And it seemed that our Lord brought my spirit next to His Father and said to Him; “This soul You have given to Me, I give to You.” And it seemed the Father took me to Himself. This was not an imaginative vision, but it caused

such great certitude and had a delicacy so spiritual that I don't know how to describe it at all. He spoke some words I do not recall; certain of them were about granting me a favor. It was for some time that He kept me near Him.

4. Since your Reverence went away so quickly yesterday (and I realize that your many occupations do not allow you time to be consoling me, even when necessary—for I see that Your Reverence's duties concern more important things), I remained afflicted and sad for awhile. Perhaps the loneliness I mentioned contributed to this. Since I don't think I'm attached to any creature on earth, I felt some scruple and feared lest I begin to lose this freedom. This sadness happened last night. And today our Lord responded and told me I shouldn't be surprised, that just as human beings desire companionship in order to communicate about the joys of their sensual natures so the soul desires when there is someone who understands it to communicate about its joys and pains; and it becomes sad when there is no one. He told me: "He is doing well and his deeds are pleasing to Me."

5. Since our Lord remained some time with me, I recalled I had told your Reverence that these visions pass away quickly. He told me there is a difference between this one and the imaginative ones and that there couldn't be any fixed rule about the favors He grants us because sometimes it was fitting that they take place in one way and at other times in another way.

6. One day after receiving Communion, it seemed most clear to me that our Lord sat beside me; and He began to console me with great favors, and He told me among other things: "See Me here, daughter, for it is I; give Me your hands." And it seemed He took them and placed them on His side and said: "Behold My wounds. You are not without Me. This short life is passing away."

From certain things He told me, I understood that after He ascended to heaven He never came down to earth to commune with anyone except in the most Blessed Sacrament.

He told me that immediately after His resurrection He went to see our Lady because she then had great need and that the pain she experienced so absorbed and transpierced her soul that she did not return immediately to herself to rejoice in that joy.

By this I understood how different was this other transpiercing, the one of my soul. But what must have been that transpiercing of the Blessed Virgin's soul! He also said that He had remained a long time with her because it was necessary in order to console her.

13.

(Avila, St. Joseph, May 29, 1571)

An intellectual vision of the Blessed Trinity

On the Tuesday following Ascension Thursday, having remained a while in prayer after Communion, I was grieved because I was so distracted I couldn't concentrate. So I complained to the Lord about our miserable nature. My soul began to enkindle, and it seemed to me I knew clearly in an intellectual vision that the entire Blessed Trinity was present. In this state my soul understood by a certain kind of representation (like an illustration of the truth), in such a way that my dullness could perceive, how God is three and one. And so it seemed that all three Persons were represented distinctly in my soul and that they spoke to me, telling me that from this day I would see an improvement in myself in respect to three things and that each one of these Persons would grant me a favor: one, the favor of charity; another, the favor of being able to suffer gladly; and the third, the favor of experiencing this charity with an enkindling in the soul. I understood those words the Lord spoke, that the three divine Persons would be with the soul in grace;¹ for I saw them within myself in the way described.²

2. While, afterward, thanking the Lord for so great a favor, finding myself unworthy of it, I asked His Majesty with deep feeling, why, since he was going to grant me favors like these, He had allowed me out of His hand to become so wretched? For on the previous day I had felt great suffering on account of my sins since they were in my mind. I saw clearly how much the Lord did on His part, from the time I was a little child, to bring me to Himself through very efficacious means, and how I didn't profit by any of them. Hence the excessive love God has in pardoning us for all this failure when we want to return

to Him was made clearly manifest to me; and for many reasons this love was greater in my case than in anybody else's.

3. It seems those three Persons, being only one God, were so fixed within my soul that I saw that were such divine company to continue it would be impossible not to be recollected.

There is no need here to put in writing some other experiences and words that occurred in this state.

4. Once, a little before this, when I was about to receive Communion, and the host was still in the ciborium—for it hadn't been given to me yet—I saw a kind of dove that was noisily fluttering its wings. It so alarmed me and caused suspension of my faculties that much effort was required to receive the host. This all happened at St. Joseph's in Avila. Father Francisco de Salcedo³ gave me the Blessed Sacrament.

5. On another day, while hearing his Mass, I saw the Lord glorified in the host. He told me that Father Francisco's sacrifice was pleasing to Him.

14.

(Avila, St. Joseph, June 30, 1571)

Habitual experience of the indwelling Trinity

I have experienced this presence of the three Persons, which I mentioned at the beginning,¹ up to this day which is the feast of the Commemoration of St. Paul.² They are very habitually present in my soul. Since I was accustomed to experience only the presence of Jesus, it always seemed to me there was some obstacle to my seeing three Persons, although I understand there is only one God. And the Lord told me today while I was reflecting upon this that I was mistaken in thinking of things of the soul through comparison with corporeal things, that I should know that these spiritual things are very different and that the soul is capable of great rejoicing. It seemed to me there came the thought of how a sponge absorbs and is saturated with water; so, I thought, was my soul which was overflowing with that divinity and in a certain way rejoicing within itself and possessing the three Persons.

I also heard the words: "Don't try to hold Me within yourself,

but try to hold yourself within Me.” It seemed to me that from within my soul — where I saw these three Persons present — these persons were communicating themselves to all creation without fail, nor did they fail to be with me.

15.

**(Avila, St. Joseph, July 1571)
Enclosure and the will of God**

A few days after the experiences mentioned above, while thinking about whether they who thought it was wrong for me to go out to found monasteries might be right, and thinking that I would do better to be always occupied in prayer,¹ I heard the words: “While one is alive, progress doesn’t come from trying to enjoy Me more but by trying to do My will.”

I thought that their recommendation would be God’s will because of what St. Paul said about the enclosure of women,² of which I was recently told and had even heard before. The Lord said to me: “Tell them they shouldn’t follow just one part of Scripture but that they should look at other parts, and ask them if they can by chance tie my hands.”

16.

**(Avila, St. Joseph, July 10, 1571)
Prayer for her brother Agustín de Ahumada**

One day after the octave of the feast of the Visitation¹ while I was in a hermitage of our Lady of Mt. Carmel praying to God for one of my brothers,² I said to the Lord (I don’t know, perhaps I may have just thought it): “Why is my brother in a place where his salvation is in danger? Were I, Lord, to see Your brother in this danger, what wouldn’t I do to help him!” It seemed to me that I would have left nothing undone in order to help.

The Lord answered me: “Oh, daughter, daughter! These Sisters in the Incarnation are My Sisters, and you delay? Well, take courage; behold I want it, and it isn’t as difficult as it seems to you. And whereas you think some harm will come to your houses, both they and the Incarnation will benefit. Do not resist,

for My power is great.”³

17.

(Avila, St. Joseph, July 22, 1571)

Desires for death

The desires and impulses for death, which were so strong, have left me, especially since the feastday of St. Mary Magdalene; for I resolved to live very willingly in order to render much service to God. There is the exception sometimes when no matter how much I try to reject the desire to see Him, I cannot.

18.

(Avila, St. Joseph, 1571)

Prophecy about St. Joseph's at Avila

Once I heard: “The time will come when many miracles will be worked in this church; they will call it the holy church.” It was in St. Joseph's at Avila in 1571.

19.

(Probably Avila, 1571)

Penance and obedience

Once while thinking about the severe penance Doña Catalina de Cardona¹ performed and about how because of the desires for penance the Lord sometimes gives me I could have done more were it not for obedience to my confessors, I thought it might be better not to obey them any longer in this matter. The Lord told me: “That's not so; you are walking on a good and safe path. Do you see all the penance she does? I value your obedience more.”

20.

(Avila, probably 1571)

Intellectual vision of a soul in grace and in sin

Once while I was in prayer, the Lord showed me by a strange

kind of intellectual vision what a soul is like in the state of grace. I saw this (through an intellectual vision) in the company of the most Blessed Trinity. From this company the soul received a power by which it had dominion over the whole earth. I was given an understanding of those words of the *Song of Songs* that say: *Veniat dilectus meus in hortum suum et comedat*.¹ I was also shown how a soul in sin is without any power, but is like a person completely bound, tied, and blindfolded; for although wanting to see, such a person cannot, and cannot walk or hear, and remains in great darkness. Souls in this condition make me feel such compassion that any burden seems light to me if I can free one of them. I thought that by understanding this condition as I did—for it can be poorly explained—it wasn't possible for me to desire that anyone lose so much good or remain in so much evil.

21.

(Avila, Incarnation, Jan. 19, 1572)

Her vision of our Lady in the choir of the Incarnation

On the eve of the feast of St. Sebastian, the first year in which I was prioress at the Incarnation, at the beginning of the *Salve Regina*, I saw the Mother of God descend with a great multitude of angels and sit in the prioress's choir stall where there was a statue of our Lady. In my opinion I didn't then see the statue but our Lady herself. It seemed to me she looked something like she does in the painting the countess gave me;¹ although the power to discern this was quickly taken away, for my faculties were soon held in great suspension. It seemed to me there were angels above the canopies of the stalls in the back and above the front stalls; although they were not in corporeal form, for this was an intellectual vision.

She remained for the whole of the *Salve*, and she told me: "You were indeed right in placing me here;² I shall be present in the praises they give my Son, and I shall offer these praises to Him."

2. After this I remained in the kind of prayer I now have, that of keeping my soul present with the Blessed Trinity. And it seemed to me that the Person of the Father drew me to Himself

and spoke very pleasant words. Among them, while showing me what He wanted, He told me: "I gave you My Son, and the Holy Spirit, and this Blessed Virgin. What can you give Me?"

22.

(Probably Avila, March 30, 1572)

Eucharistic experience

On Palm Sunday after Communion, my faculties remained in such deep suspension that I couldn't even swallow the host; and, holding it in my mouth, after I returned a little to myself, it truly seemed to me that my entire mouth was filled with blood. I felt that my face and all the rest of me was also covered with this blood, as though the Lord had just then finished shedding it. It seemed to me warm, and the sweetness I then experienced was extraordinary. The Lord said to me: "Daughter, I want my blood to be beneficial to you, and don't be afraid that My mercy will fail you. I shed it with many sufferings, and you enjoy it with the great delight you are aware of; I repay you well for the banquet you prepare me this day."

He said this because for more than thirty years I have received Communion on this day when possible and have striven to prepare my soul to give hospitality to the Lord. For it seemed to me cruel of the Jews, after having given Him such an enthusiastic reception, to have let Him go so far away to eat; and I imagined I invited Him to remain with me, which was very bad lodging for Him, as I now see. Thus I made some foolish reflections. The Lord must have accepted them, because this is one of the visions I hold to be very certain; and so the Communion was beneficial to me.

2. Previous to this, I believe for three days, I underwent that great suffering I bear, sometimes more than at other times, of being separated from God. During these days it had been very great, for it seemed I couldn't endure it. Having been in such anguish, I saw one evening that it was too late to eat supper, and so I was unable to do so. (Because of the vomitings it made me very weak not to have my supper earlier.) Thus with great effort I put the bread in front of me so as to force myself to eat

it. At once Christ appeared there, and it seemed to me He broke the bread and was about to place it in my mouth when He said: "Eat, daughter, and bear up as best you can. What you suffer grieves me, but it suits you now."

That suffering was taken away and I was consoled, for it truly seemed that He was with me, and throughout the next day as well. By this experience the desire for His presence was at that time satisfied.

The words "grieves me" made me stop to think because it doesn't seem to me He can be sorrowful over anything any more.

23.

**(Place and date uncertain)
Am I not your God**

"Why are you disturbed, little sinner? Am I not your God? Don't you see how badly I was treated there? If you love me, why don't you grieve for me?"

24.

**(Avila, Incarnation, 1572)
True humility—Put my counsels in writing**

With regard to the fear about whether or not I was in the state of grace, He told me: "Daughter, light is very different from darkness. I am faithful. Nobody will be lost unknowingly. They who find security in spiritual favors will be deceived. True security is the testimony of a good conscience. But people should not think that through their own efforts they can be in light or that they can do anything to prevent the night, because these states depend upon my grace. The best help for holding on to the light is to understand that you can do nothing and that it comes from me. For even though you may be in light, at the moment I withdraw, the night will come. This is true humility: to know what you can do and what I can do.

"Don't fail to write down the counsels I give you, so that you don't forget them. Since you want the counsels of men in writing, why do you think you're losing time by writing down those I

give you? The time will come when you will need them all.”

25.

(Date and place uncertain)

The nature of union

In explaining the nature of union to me, He said:

1. “Don’t think, daughter, that union lies in being very close to me. For those, too, who offend me are close, although they may not want to be. Neither does it consist in favors and consolations in prayer, even though these may reach a very sublime degree. Though these favors may come from Me, they are often a means for winning souls, even souls that are not in the state of grace.”

I was experiencing a lofty elevation of the spirit when I heard those words. The Lord gave me understanding of what spirit was and in what state my soul then was and how to understand the words of the Magnificat, *Exultavit spiritus meus*.¹ I wouldn’t know how to describe this experience. It seems to me I was given an understanding that the spirit is the higher part of the will.

2. Getting back to union, I understood that it consists in the spirit being pure and raised above all earthly things so that there is nothing in the soul that wants to turn aside from God’s will; but there is such conformity with God in spirit and will, and detachment from everything, and involvement with Him, that there is no thought of love of self or of any creature.

3. I have thought: if this is union, then we can say of a soul that invariably has determination like this that it is always in the prayer of union. It is true that this prayer of union lasts only a short while. It occurred to me that with respect to walking in uprightness, meriting, and making progress, union does last; but it cannot be said that the soul is in union as it is when in contemplation. It seems to me I understood, although not by words, that the dust of our misery, faults, and impediments, in which we again immerse ourselves, is so great that it would be impossible to have the purity the spirit has when it is joined to God; for the spirit then leaves and rises above our wretched misery. And it seems to me that if this experience is union, that

is, our will and spirit being thus made one with God's, it is impossible for anyone who is not in the state of grace to have it; for I have been told it is. So it would seem to me very difficult, unless by a special grace from God, to understand when there is union since we cannot know when we are in the state of grace.

4. Will your Reverence² write me your opinion and let me know where I am mistaken, and send this paper back to me.

26.

(Avila, date uncertain)

Do not renounce what awakens love

I read in a book that it was an imperfection to have ornate paintings. So I didn't want to keep one I had in my cell. Even before I read this it seemed to me a practice of poverty not to have any other images than paper ones. And since it was after I had formed this opinion that I read the above, I had no longer kept any other kind. And having forgotten about this, I heard the following: that what I wanted to do was not a good mortification (what was better, poverty or charity?); that since love was the better, I shouldn't renounce anything that awakened my love, nor should I take such a thing away from my nuns; that the book was talking about the many carvings and adornments surrounding the picture and not about the picture itself; that what the devil did among the Lutherans was take away all the means for awakening love, and so they went astray. "My Christians, daughter, must now more than ever do the opposite of what they do."

I understood that I had a great obligation to serve our Lady and St. Joseph; for often when I went off the path completely, God gave me salvation again through their prayers.

27.

(Avila, Incarnation, June 1572)

Spiritual improvement at the Incarnation

On the octave day of Pentecost the Lord granted me a favor and gave me hope that this house would continue to improve—I

mean that the souls in it would.

28.

**(Avila, Incarnation, July 22, 1572)
A favor on St. Mary Magdalene's feast**

On the feast of St. Mary Magdalene the Lord again confirmed in me a favor He had granted me in Toledo, choosing me in the place of a certain person who was absent.¹

29.

**(Avila, Incarnation, Sept. 22, 1572)
Infused knowledge of the Blessed Trinity**

One day, after the feast of St. Matthew, being in the state I'm usually in since I've seen the vision of the Blessed Trinity and how it dwells in a soul in the state of grace,¹ a very clear understanding of this mystery was granted to me so that in certain ways and through comparisons I beheld it in an imaginative vision. Although at other times knowledge of the Blessed Trinity was given me through an intellectual vision, the truth, after a few days, no longer remained with me so that I could think about it and find consolation in it, as I can now. And now I realize that in a similar way I had heard about this truth from learned men but didn't understand it as I do at present, although I always believed it without hesitation because I have never had temptations against the faith.

2. To us ignorant people it appears that all three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are—as represented in paintings—in one Person, as when three faces are painted on one body. And thus we are so scared away that it seems the mystery is impossible and that no one should dare think about it. For the intellect feels hindered and fears lest it might have doubts about this truth, and it thereby loses something very beneficial.

3. What was represented to me were three distinct Persons, for we can behold and speak to each one. Afterward I reflected that only the Son took human flesh, through which this truth of the Trinity was seen. These Persons love, communicate with.

and know each other. Well, if each one is by Himself, how is it that we say all three are one essence, and believe it? And this is a very great truth for which I would die a thousand deaths. In all three Persons there is no more than one will, one power, and one dominion, in such a way that one cannot do anything without the others. But no matter how many creatures there are, there is only one Creator. Could the Son create an ant without the Father? No, for it is all one power, and the same goes for the Holy Spirit; thus there is only one all-powerful God and all three Persons are one Majesty. Could one love the Father without loving the Son and the Holy Spirit? No, but anyone who pleases one of these three divine Persons, pleases all three, and the same goes for anyone who might offend one. Could the Father exist without the Son or without the Holy Spirit? No, because the essence is one; and where one is, all three are, for they cannot be separated. Well, how do we see that the three Persons are separate, and how did the Son take on human flesh and not the Father or the Holy Spirit? This I haven't understood. The theologians know. I know well that in that work so marvellous all three were present, and I don't get involved in thinking a lot about this. I immediately conclude my reflection with the observation that God is all-powerful and that whatever He wanted to do He did, and thus He will be able to do all He desires. And when I understand less, I believe more; and this belief gives me greater devotion. May He be blessed forever. Amen.

30.

**(Place and date uncertain)
Her mission in Carmel**

If our Lord hadn't granted me the favors He did, it doesn't seem to me I would have had the courage for the works that were done or the strength to support the trials suffered and the statements and judgments made against me. So after the foundations were begun, the fears I previously had in thinking I was deceived left me. I grew certain the work was God's, and so I threw myself into difficult tasks, although always with advice

and under obedience. As a result I understand that since our Lord desired to revive the original spirit of this order, and in His mercy He took me as a means, His Majesty had to provide me with what I was lacking, which was everything, in order to get results and better manifest His greatness through so wretched a thing.

31.

**(Avila, Incarnation, Nov. 18, 1572)
Spiritual Marriage**

While at the Incarnation in the second year that I was prioress, on the octave of the feast of St. Martin, when I was receiving Communion, Father John of the Cross¹ who was giving me the Blessed Sacrament broke the host to provide for another Sister. I thought there was no lack of hosts but that he wanted to mortify me because I had told him it pleased me very much when the hosts were large (not that I didn't understand that the size made no difference with regard to the Lord's being wholly present, even when the particle is very small). His Majesty said to me: "Don't fear, daughter, for no one will be a party to separating you from Me," making me thereby understand that what just happened didn't matter. Then He appeared to me in an imaginative vision, as at other times, very interiorly, and He gave me His right hand and said: "Behold this nail; it is a sign you will be My bride from today on. Until now you have not merited this; from now on not only will you look after My honor as being the honor of your Creator, King, and God, but you will look after it as My true bride. My honor is yours, and yours Mine." This favor produced such an effect in me I couldn't contain myself, and I remained as though entranced. I asked the Lord either to raise me from my lowliness or not grant me such a favor; for it didn't seem to me my nature could bear it. Throughout the whole day I remained thus very absorbed. Afterward I felt great pain, and greater confusion and affliction at seeing I don't render any service in exchange for such amazing favors.

32.
(Probably Avila, 1572)
The way of suffering and love

On another day the Lord told me this: "Do you think, daughter, that merit lies in enjoyment? No, rather it lies in working and suffering and loving. Haven't you heard that St. Paul rejoiced in heavenly joys only once and that he suffered often. Look at my whole life filled with suffering, and only in the incident on Mount Tabor do you hear about my joy.¹ When you see My Mother holding Me in her arms, don't think she enjoyed those consolations without heavy torment. From the time Simeon spoke those words to her,² My Father gave her clear light to see what I was to suffer. The great saints who lived in deserts, since they were guided by God, performed severe penances; and besides this, they waged great battle with the devil and with themselves. They spent long periods without any spiritual consolation. Believe, daughter, that My Father gives greater trials to anyone whom He loves more; and love responds to these. How can I show you greater love than by desiring for you what I have desired for Myself? Behold these wounds, for your sufferings have never reached this point. Suffering is the way of truth. By this means you will help me weep over the loss of those who follow the way of the world, and you will understand that all your desires, cares, and thoughts must be employed in how to do the opposite."

2. When I had begun prayer I had such a bad headache I thought it would be almost impossible to pray. The Lord said to me: "In this way you will see the reward that comes from suffering, for since you did not have the health to speak with Me, I have spoken with you and favored you." And so it is certain that I must have been recollected about an hour and a half. During that time He spoke the above words to me and all the rest. I was not distracted, but neither did I know where I was; and I was so happy I don't know how to describe it. My headache went away—which surprised me—and I was left with a great desire for suffering.

It is true, at least I haven't heard otherwise, that our Lord

didn't have any joy in life other than this once, nor did St. Paul. The Lord also told me I should keep very much in mind the words He spoke to His apostles, that the servant must not be greater than the lord.³

33.

(Place uncertain, 1572-1573)

A prophetic vision of victory for her Carmel

I saw a great tempest of trials and that just as the children of Israel were persecuted by the Egyptians, so we would be persecuted; but that God would bring us through dry-shod, and our enemies would be swallowed up by the waves.¹

34.

(Beas, 1575)

A spiritual token¹

One day when I was staying at our monastery in Beas, our Lord told me that since I was His bride I should make requests of Him, for He had promised that whatever I asked He would grant me. And as a token He gave me a beautiful ring, with a precious stone resembling an amethyst but with a brilliance very different from any here on earth, and He placed the ring on my finger. I write this with confusion at seeing the goodness of God and my wretched life, for I deserved hell. But, alas, daughters, pray for me and be devoted to St. Joseph who can do a great deal. I'm writing this foolishness. . .

35.

(Ecija, Andalusia, May 23, 1575)¹**The vow of obedience to Father Gratian**

On the second day after Pentecost, while at Ecija,² a person was recalling a great favor she had received from our Lord on the vigil of this feast.³ Desiring to do something very special in His service, she thought it would be good to promise from that time on not to hide any fault or sin she had committed in her

whole life from the one who stood in God's place. Even though she had made a vow of obedience, this promise seemed to involve something more, because there's no obligation like this toward one's superiors. And she also promised to do all that this confessor might tell her—with regard to serious matters, of course—providing it would not go against her vow of obedience. And even though keeping this promise was hard for her in the beginning, she made it.

2. The first reason why she decided to do so was the thought that she was rendering some service to the Holy Spirit; the second was that she chose a person who was a great servant of God and a learned man, who would help her serve the Lord more.

This learned man knew nothing about the above until some days after she had made the promise. He was Friar Jerome Gratian of the Mother of God.

36.

(Beas, April, 1575)

The vow of obedience to Father Gratian

Material having to do with my conscience and soul. Let no one read it even though I be dead, but give it to the Father Master Gratian.

IHS

1. In 1575, during the month of April, while I was at the foundation in Beas, it happened that the Master Friar Jerome Gratian of the Mother of God came there. I had gone to confession to him at times, but I hadn't held him in the place I had other confessors, by letting myself be completely guided by him. One day while I was eating, without any interior recollection, my soul began to be suspended and recollected in such a way that I thought some rapture was trying to come upon me; and a vision appeared with the usual quickness, like a flash of lightning.

2. It seemed to me our Lord Jesus Christ was next to me in the form in which He usually appears, and at His right side stood Master Gratian himself, and I at His left. The Lord took our right hands and joined them and told me He desired that I take this master to represent Him as long as I live, and that we both

agree to everything because it was thus fitting.

3. I remained with very great assurance that the vision was from God. The remembrance of the two confessors I had gone to and followed for a long time and to whom I owed a great deal made me undecided. The remembrance of one especially made me put up strong resistance, since it seemed to me I was offending him; for I had great respect and love for him. In spite of this I felt assurance from the vision that such an action suited me, and also comfort coming from the thought that this going about consulting different minds with different opinions was now to end. For some, by not understanding me, made me suffer very much; although I never gave up any of them until either they moved away or I did, because I thought the fault was mine. Twice more the Lord returned to tell me in different words not to fear since He gave Master Gratian to me. So I resolved not to do otherwise, and I made the proposal within myself to carry out the Lord's request for the rest of my life, to follow Father Gratian's opinion in everything as long as it wasn't clearly offensive to God—and I was certain it would not be; for, according to some things I have heard, I believe he has made the same promise I have made, of doing the more perfect thing in all matters.

4. I was left with a peace and comfort so great I was amazed, and I felt certain the Lord wanted this, for it doesn't seem to me the devil could give such great peace and comfort of soul. It seems to me I remained outside myself in a way I don't know how to describe, but each time I recall this vision I again praise our Lord and remember that verse which says, *Qui posuit fines suos in pace*;¹ and I want to be consumed in the praises of God.

It seems to me this promise must be for His glory, and so I again propose never to make a change.

5. The second day of Pentecost, after this resolution, while on our way to Seville, we heard Mass in a hermitage in Ecija² and remained there for siesta. While my companions were in the hermitage and I was alone in the sacristy there, I began to think of the wonderful favor the Holy Spirit had granted me on the vigil of that feast of Pentecost.³ Great desires came over me to render Him a special service, but I couldn't find anything that

wasn't done. I recalled that although I had made a vow of obedience, it wasn't of a kind I could obey with perfection; and the thought came to me that it would be pleasing to the Holy Spirit to promise what I had proposed in regard to the friar, Father Jerome. On the one hand it seemed to me I wouldn't be doing anything by such a promise, and on the other hand it struck me as something very arduous when I reflected that with superiors you don't reveal your interior state; and that if you don't get along well with one superior, there is finally a change, and another one comes along; and that this promise would mean remaining without any freedom either interiorly or exteriorly throughout life.⁴ And I felt pressed a little, and even very much, not to go through with it.

6. This very resistance that my thoughts caused in my will reproached me. It seemed to me there was already something presenting itself to me that I wasn't doing for God and which I had always fled. The fact is the difficulty so bothered me I don't think I did anything in my life, not even in making profession, over which I felt within myself greater resistance, except when I left my father's house to become a nun. This resistance was the reason I didn't consider my love for this Father; but rather, I then considered the matter as though it regarded a stranger. Nor did I consider his good qualities, but only whether it would be good to make this promise for the Holy Spirit. The doubts that arose as to whether or not it would be of service to God, I believe, caused me to delay.

7. At the end of a period of battle, the Lord gave me great confidence so that it seemed to me I made that promise for the Holy Spirit, and that the Spirit was obliged to give the Father light so that he in turn might give it to me. It also seemed I was to recall that it was our Lord Jesus Christ who had given me the light. And at this point I knelt down and promised that for the rest of my life I would do everything Master Gratian might tell me, as long as there was nothing in opposition to God or my superiors to whom I was obliged. It was my intention that this would apply only in serious matters so as to avoid scruples; for example, when I insist with Father Jerome about some trifling thing in regard to his comfort or mine, and he in turn tells

me not to speak of it any more. For such insistence implies no lack of obedience or intention to hide knowingly any of my faults or sins. And not hiding these also involves more than what one is obliged to with superiors. In sum, it was my intention to hold him in the place of God, interiorly and exteriorly.

8. I don't know if I merited, but it seemed to me I did something great for the Holy Spirit, at least all I knew how; and so I remained with great satisfaction and happiness, and I have remained so since then. And although I feared I might be restricted, I was left with greater freedom; and I was more confident our Lord would grant Father Gratian new favors for this service I rendered to God and that I might share in them and receive light in everything.

Blessed be He who created a person who so pleased me that I could dare do this.

37.

(Place and year uncertain, July 22)

Desire to live and serve the Lord

On the feast of St. Mary Magdalene while I was reflecting on the friendship with our Lord I'm obliged to maintain and also on the words He spoke to me about this saint,¹ and having insistent desires to imitate her, the Lord granted me a great favor and told me that from now on I should try hard, that I was going to have to serve Him more than I did up to this point. This favor gave me the desire not to die so soon, that I might have time to be occupied in His service, and I was left with strong determination to suffer.

38.

(Place and date uncertain)

Locution about Father Gratian

One day I was very recollected in recommending Eliseus¹ to God. I heard, "He is my true son, I shall not cease to help him," or some words to this effect which I don't remember well.

39.

(Seville, Aug. 9, 1575)

Establishing a feast of our Lady

On the vigil of St. Lawrence, just after receiving Communion, my mental faculties were so scattered and distracted I couldn't help myself, and I began to envy those who live in deserts and to think that since they don't hear or see anything they are free of this wandering of the mind. I heard: "You are greatly mistaken, daughter; rather, the temptations of the devil there are stronger; be patient, for as long as you live, a wandering mind cannot be avoided."

2. While I was in this state, there suddenly came upon me a recollection with an interior light so great it seemed I was in another world. And my spirit found within itself a very delightful forest and garden, so delightful it made me recall what is said in the Song of Songs: *Veniat dilectus meus in hortum suum*.¹ I saw my Eliseus there, certainly not in any way black, but with a strange beauty. On his head was what resembled a garland of precious stones, and many maidens went before him with branches in their hands singing songs of praise to God. I didn't do anything but open my eyes so as to distract myself, and this wasn't enough to take away my attention. It seemed to me there was music from small birds and angels in which the soul rejoiced; although I didn't hear it, but the soul was experiencing that delight. I observed how there was no other man there. I was told; "He deserved to be among you, and this whole festival you see will be had on the day when the feast in praise of my Mother will be established,² and hurry if you wish to be where he is."

3. Bringing me great delight, this vision lasted more than an hour and a half, for I couldn't distract myself; it was different from other visions. And what I drew from this was love for Eliseus and a remembrance of him in that beauty. I had feared lest it be a temptation, for it was impossible that it be the work of my imagination.

40.

**(Probably Seville, second half of 1575)
God's omnipresence**

One time I understood how the Lord was present in all things, and how in the soul, and I thought of the example of a sponge which absorbs water.¹

41.

**(Seville, August, 1575)
The constitutions and the Lord's law**

Since my brothers had come and I owe so much to one of them, I didn't cease being with this one and discussing what was suited to his soul and state;¹ and this all made me weary and uneasy. While offering these actions to the Lord and thinking I was thus obliged, I recalled that our constitutions tell us we should keep away from relatives.² Thinking about whether I was obliged to follow these constitutions in this matter, the Lord told me: "No, daughter, for your institutions must be in conformity with My law." Indeed, the intention of the constitutions is that there be no attachment to relatives. And, in my opinion, it tires and wearies me more to converse with them.

42.

**(Seville, Aug. 28, 1575)
Infused knowledge of the Trinity**

After having received Communion on the feast of St. Augustine, I understood—I'm unable to say how—and almost saw (although it was something intellectual and passed quickly) how the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, which I bear imprinted in my soul, are one. By means of the strangest painting and a very clear light, I was given an understanding that was an activity very different from merely holding this truth by faith. As a result I haven't been able to think of any of the three divine Persons without thinking of all three. Thus I was reflecting to-day upon how, since they were so united, the Son alone could

have taken human flesh; and the Lord gave me understanding of how although they are united they are distinct. These are grandeurs which make the soul again desire to be free from this body that hinders their enjoyment. For although it seems our lowliness was not meant for understanding anything about them, the soul, without knowing how, receives incomparably greater benefit from this understanding even though it lasts only a moment—than from many years of meditation.

43.

(Seville, Sept. 8, 1575)

Renewal of vows in our Lady's hands

On the feast of the Nativity of our Lady I feel special joy. When this day comes, I think it's good to renew my vows. And once while I was about to do so, the Blessed Virgin, our Lady, appeared to me through an illuminative vision; and it seems to me I renewed them in her hands and that they were pleasing to her. This vision remained with me for some days, as though she were next to me at my left.

44.

(Probably Seville, 1575)

Union with Christ in the Eucharist

One day after having received Communion, I truly thought my soul was made one with the most sacred Body of the Lord. He appeared to me and by His presence caused me to make much progress.

45.

(Seville, late 1575)

The reform of the monastery of Paterna

I was once thinking about whether they were going to send me to reform a certain monastery, and this troubled me. I heard: "What do you fear? What can you lose but the lives you have so often offered me? I shall help you." It happened on a certain

occasion in such a way that my soul was much satisfied.¹

46.

(Seville, late 1575)

An effect of the spiritual marriage

Having spoken one day to a person who had given up a great deal for God and recalling how I had never given up anything for Him — nor have I ever served Him in accordance with my obligation — and considering the many favors he had bestowed on my soul, I began to grow very anxious. And the Lord said: “You already know of the epousal between you and Me. Because of this epousal, whatever I have is yours. So I give you all the trials and sufferings I underwent, and by these means, as with something belonging to you, you can make requests of my Father.” Although I had heard we share these, now I had heard it in such a different way that it seemed I felt great dominion. The friendship in which this favor was granted me cannot be described here. It seemed to me the Father accepted the fact of this sharing; and since then I look very differently upon what the Lord suffered, as something belonging to me — and it gives me great comfort.¹

47.

(Probably Seville, 1575)

The value of good works

Once while desiring to render some service to our Lord, I was thinking about how little I was able to do for Him and I said to myself: “Why, Lord, do You desire my works?” He answered: “In order to see your will, daughter.”

48.

(Seville, perhaps 1575)

The Lord tells her to record His words

Once the Lord granted me light on a matter it pleased me to know about. Soon afterward I forgot, for I couldn't again

remember what it was. And while trying to recall it I heard this: “You already know I sometimes speak to you; don’t neglect to write down what I say; for even though it may not benefit you, it can benefit others.” I was wondering whether I was to be helpful to others but on account of my sins be lost myself. He said to me: “Have no fear.”

49.

(Probably Seville, 1575)

God’s presence in the soul

Once while I was recollected in this company I always bear with me in my soul, God seemed so present to me that I thought of St. Peter’s words: *You are Christ, Son of the Living God.*¹ For God was thus living in my soul. This presence is not like other visions, because it is accompanied by such living faith that one cannot doubt that the Trinity is in our souls by presence, power, and essence. It is an extremely beneficial thing to understand this truth. Since I was amazed to see such majesty in something so lowly as my soul, I heard: “It is not lowly, daughter, for it is made in My image.” I also understood some things about why God delights to be with souls more than with other creatures. These matters were so subtle that even though my intellect understood them immediately, I shall not be able to explain them.

50.

(Seville, probably 1575)

Father Gratian’s health

Having been so distressed over our Father’s health that I couldn’t be at peace, and begging the Lord very emphatically one day after Communion that since He had given our Father to me He not allow me to be without him, the Lord told me: “Don’t be afraid.”

51.

(Seville, 1575)

The indwelling of the Blessed Trinity

Once while with this presence of the three Persons that I carry about in my soul, I experienced so much light you couldn't doubt the living and true God was there. In this state He gave me understanding of things I didn't know how to speak of afterward. Among them was how the Person of the Son, and not the others, took flesh. As I say, I wouldn't know how to explain any of these things. For some of them take place so secretly in the soul that it seems the intellect understands as in the case of a person who while sleeping or half asleep thinks that what is spoken is understood within. I was reflecting upon how arduous a life this is that deprives us of being always in that wonderful company, and I said to myself, "Lord, give me some means by which I can put up with this life." He replied: "Think, daughter, of how after it is finished you will not be able to serve me in ways you can now. Eat for Me and sleep for Me, and let everything you do be for Me, as though you no longer lived but I; for this is what St. Paul was speaking of."¹

52.

(Probably Seville, 1575)

Deep secrets revealed in Communion

Once after receiving Communion I was given understanding of how the Father receives within our soul the most holy Body of Christ, and of how I know and have seen that these divine Persons are present, and of how pleasing to the Father this offering of His Son is, because He delights and rejoices with Him here—let us say—on earth. For His humanity is not present with us in the soul, but His divinity is. Thus the humanity is so welcome and pleasing to the Father and bestows on us so many favors. I understood that He also receives this sacrifice from the priest who is in sin, except that He doesn't grant to his soul the favors He grants to those who are in the state of grace. But the reason for this isn't because these influences proceeding from

this communication, by which the Father receives this sacrifice, lose their force, but because of a lack on the part of the one receiving it; just as the lack is not on the part of the sun when it fails to shine on a piece of pitch as it does on crystal, but on the part of the pitch. If I could now describe this, I would give a better explanation. It is important to know the nature of this communication, for there are deep interior secrets revealed when one receives Communion. It is a pity that these bodies of ours do not let us enjoy them.

53.

(Seville, Nov. 8, 1575)

Intellectual vision of the Lord's nearness

On the octave day of All Saints I spent two or three very troublesome days over the remembrance of my great sins and because of some fears of my being persecuted that had no foundation, except that false testimony was going to be raised.¹ And all the courage I usually have for suffering left me. Although I wanted to encourage myself, and I made acts and reflected that this suffering would be very beneficial to my soul, all these actions helped me little. For the fear didn't go away, and what I felt was a vexing war. I chanced upon a letter in which my good Father² refers to what St. Paul says, that God does not permit us to be tempted beyond what we can suffer.³ That comforted me a lot, but it wasn't enough. Rather, the next day I became sorely afflicted in seeing I was without him, since I had no one to whom I could have recourse in this tribulation. It seemed to me I was living in great loneliness, and this loneliness increased when I saw that there was no one now but him who might give me comfort and that he had to be absent most of the time, which was a great torment to me.⁴

2. On the next night, while reading in a book a saying of St. Paul which began to console me, I was thinking of how present our Lord had previously been to me, for He had so truly seemed to be the living God. While I was thinking about this, He appeared in an intellectual vision, very deep within me, as though on the side where the heart is, and said: "Here I am, but I want

you to see what little you can do without Me.”

3. I felt reassured right away, and all my fears were gone. While I was at Matins that same night, the Lord, through an intellectual vision so intense it almost seemed to be an imaginative one, placed Himself in my arms as in the painting of the fifth agony.⁵ This vision caused me great fear. For it was so clear, and He was so close to me that I wondered if it was an illusion. He told me: “Don’t be surprised by this, for My Father is with your soul in an incomparably greater union.”

This vision has so remained up till now. What I said of our Lord lasted more than a month. Now it is gone.

54.

(Seville, 1575)

Vision of Father Gratian

One night I was very distressed because it had been a long time since I had heard from my Father, and he had not been well when he last wrote. My affliction though was not like it had been when I first heard of his illness; for now I had confidence, and I was never as distressed as I had been the first time.¹ But my concern hindered my prayer. He suddenly appeared to me, and in such a way that it couldn’t have been my imagination. For a light appeared in the interior of my soul, and I beheld him coming along the road, happy and with a white countenance. Although by reason of the light by which I saw he had to have a white countenance, it seems to me that so do all those who are in heaven. And I wondered if the light and brilliance that comes from our Lord makes them white. I heard: “Tell him to begin at once without fear, for his is the victory.”

2. The day after he came, while I was praising our Lord at night for having granted me so many favors, the Lord said to me: “What do you ask of Me, my daughter, that I do not do?”

55.

(Seville, Nov. 21, 1575)

The feast of the Presentation of our Lady in the temple

On the day the brief was presented,¹ while I was anxiously waiting, I was all troubled and couldn't even pray vocally. For they had come to tell me our Father's life was in danger. It wasn't allowed for him to leave the monastery and there were so many rumors. I heard these words: "O woman of little faith! Be calm, for things are going very well."

2. It was the feast of the Presentation of our Lady, in the year 1575. I resolved within myself that if the Virgin would obtain from her Son that we see both our Father and ourselves freed from these friars, I would ask our Father for an indult that in all of our monasteries of the disalced nuns this feast could be celebrated with solemnity.

3. When I made this resolve I didn't recall what I had heard in the vision I'd seen, that the Father would establish a feast.² Now in turning back to read this little notebook, I have wondered if the feast could be this one of the Presentation.

56.

(Seville, 1575 or 1576)

Infused understanding of a Magnificat verse

While in prayer one day, I felt my soul to be so deep in God that it didn't seem there was a world; but while immersed in Him, understanding of that Magnificat verse, *et exultavit spiritus*,¹ was given to me in such a way I cannot forget it.

57.

(Seville, spring, 1576)

Revelation about the survival of her Carmel

I was once thinking about their desire to suppress this monastery of disalced nuns, and of whether it was their intention little by little to put an end to them all. I heard: "They are attempting this, but will not succeed—on the contrary."

58.

(Seville, 1576)

Account of her spiritual life for the Inquisitor of Seville¹

Forty years ago this nun took the habit. And from the beginning she has turned her thoughts to the mysteries and the Passion of our Lord and to her sins without ever thinking about supernatural experiences; rather, she has thought about how quickly creatures or things come to an end. And she has spent some periods of the day reflecting on these matters without it even passing through her mind to desire anything more, for her opinion of herself has been such that she has seen that she doesn't deserve even to think about God.

2. She spent about twenty-two years in this way with great dryness, devoting time also to reading good books. It was eighteen years ago that she began to discuss—about three years before the actuality—her first monastery of discalced nuns which she founded in Avila. For, as it seemed to her, she began sometimes to receive interior locutions, and she saw some visions and experienced revelations. She never saw anything, nor has seen anything, of these visions with her bodily eyes. Rather, the representation came like a lightning flash, but it left as great an impression upon her and as many effects as it would if she had seen it with her bodily eyes, and more so.

3. She was terrified, for sometimes she didn't even dare remain alone during the day. Since she couldn't avoid the experiences no matter how much she tried, she went about terribly afflicted, fearing lest she be deceived by the devil. She began to discuss the matter with spiritual persons of the Society of Jesus, among whom were: Father Araoz² who happened to go to Avila, for he was the commissary of the Society of Jesus; Father Francis,³ with whom she spoke twice, who had been duke of Gandía; a provincial of the Society, named Gil González,⁴ who is now in Rome and one of the four counselors; also the present provincial of Castile, although she did not speak so much with him; Baltasar Alvarez,⁵ who is now rector in Salamanca and who was her confessor for six years; the rector at Cuenca, named Salazar;⁶ and, not for long, the rector at Segovia, named San-

tander;⁷ the rector at Burgos, whose name is Ripalda,⁸ who was even very unfavorable to her until she talked with him; Doctor Pablo Hernández of Toledo,⁹ who was a consultant to the Inquisition; and another, Ordóñez,¹⁰ who was rector at Avila. In short, wherever she went she sought out those who were most esteemed.

4. She spoke frequently with Friar Peter of Alcántara,¹¹ and it was he who did a great deal for her.

5. During this time (for more than six years), she was put to the test, shed many tears, and underwent much affliction; and the greater the trials the more favors she received. Often she experienced suspension of the faculties while in prayer, and even outside of it. Many prayers were said and Masses offered that God might lead her by another path, for she had the greatest fear when she was not in prayer, although in all things touching upon the service of God she clearly understood there was improvement, and no vainglory or pride. On the contrary, she felt embarrassed before those who knew about the favors, and regretted speaking about these favors more than she did speaking about her sins; for it seemed to her that her confessors would laugh at her and attribute these favors to the foolish things of women.

6. It was about thirteen years ago, a little more or less, that the Bishop of Salamanca went there, for he was the Inquisitor, I believe, in Toledo and had been here.¹² For the sake of greater assurance she arranged to speak with him and gave him an account of everything. He told her this whole matter was something that didn't belong to his office because all that she saw and understood strengthened her ever more in the Catholic faith. For she always was and is firm in the faith, and she experiences the strongest desires for the honor of God and the good of souls. These desires are such that for one soul she would allow herself to be killed many times. Since he saw she was so concerned, he told her she should write to Master Avila¹³—who was alive—a long account of everything, for he was a man who understood much about prayer; and that with what he would write her, she could be at peace. She did so, and he replied giving her much assurance. Her account¹⁴ was of such a kind that all the learned men who saw it—for they were her confessors—

said it was very helpful for information about spiritual things. They ordered her to make a copy and write another little book for her daughters¹⁵ in which she could give some counsels, for she was prioress.

7. In spite of all this, she was not without fears at times, and it seemed to her that spiritual people could be deceived as well as she. She wanted to speak with very learned men, even though they might not be given to prayer, for she only wanted to know whether all her experiences were in conformity with Sacred Scripture. And she was sometimes consoled, thinking that even though she may have deserved to be deceived because of her sins, God would not permit so many persons to be deceived since they desired to give her light.

8. With this thought in mind she began to discuss these favors with Dominican Fathers because previous to such experiences she often had these Fathers as confessors. The following are the ones whom she consulted. Friar Vicente Barrón¹⁶ was her confessor for a year and a half in Toledo, when she was there for a foundation, for he was consultant to the Inquisition and a very learned man. He gave her much assurance. (And all of them told her that since she didn't offend God and knew she was wretched, she had nothing to fear.) The Master, Friar Domingo Báñez¹⁷ (who is now consultant to the Holy Office in Valladolid) was her confessor for six years, and she always kept in contact with him by letter when something new presented itself. She consulted with Master Chaves.¹⁸ Besides Friar Domingo Báñez, she consulted Friar Pedro Ibáñez,¹⁹ who was then a professor in Avila and a most learned man; and another Dominican whose name was Friar García de Toledo.²⁰ She consulted the Father Master, Friar Bartolomé de Medina,²¹ who has a professor's chair at Salamanca, and who she knew had a very bad opinion of her because he had heard about these experiences. And she thought he better than anyone would tell her if she were being deceived. She consulted him a little more than two years ago when she came to Salamanca. She arranged to go to confession to him and gave him a long account of everything, and she provided that he see what she had written so that he might understand her life better. He assured her very

much—more than all of them—and became her close friend. She also made her confession for a time to the Father Master, Friar Felipe de Meneses,²² when she went to Valladolid for a foundation and he was the prior or rector of that College of St. Gregory. Having heard about these things, he went with great charity to speak to her in Avila, wanting to know if she was being deceived, and pointing out that if she wasn't, there was no reason for so much criticism of her; and he was very satisfied. She also took the matter up with a Dominican provincial, named Salinas,²³ who was a very spiritual man and a great servant of God; and with another professor, now in Segovia, named Friar Diego de Yanguas,²⁴ who has a truly keen mind.

9. During so many years in which she was subject to those fears, she had the opportunity to consult with others, especially since she went to so many places for foundations. They all tested her because they all wanted to be certain in giving her light; by this light they assured her and were assured themselves.

10. She ever was and ever is subject to all that the holy Catholic faith holds, and all her prayer and the prayer in the houses she has founded is for the increase in the faith. She used to say that if any of her experiences were to induce her to turn against the Catholic faith or the law of God, she would have no need to go in search of proof, for then she would see it was the devil.

11. She never did anything based on what she understood in prayer. Rather, if her confessors told her to do the contrary, she did it immediately, and always informed them about everything. She never believed so decidedly that an experience was from God that, no matter how much they told her it was, she would swear to the fact; although by reason of the effects and great favors that were granted her in some matters, the experience may have seemed to her to be from the good spirit. But she always desired virtues, and this desire she urged upon her nuns, saying that the most humble and mortified would be the most spiritual.

12. What she has written²⁵ she gave to the Father Master, Friar Domingo Báñez, who is in Valladolid. For it is with him that she more often discusses and has discussed these experiences. She thinks he has presented her written account to the Holy

Office in Madrid.²⁶ In all of it she submits to the correction of the Catholic faith and of the Church. No one has blamed her, for these experiences are not within anyone's power; and our Lord doesn't ask the impossible.

13. Since an account was given to so many because of the great fear she was undergoing, many of these experiences were told around, which was for her an extraordinary torment and cross. She says that this suffering was not caused by humility but by the fear that these things would be attributed to women's fancy. She went to the extreme of not submitting herself to the judgment of any person who she thought believed that everything was from God, for she feared that then the devil would deceive both him and her. She discussed her soul more willingly with anyone who she saw was more fearful, although it also caused her grief to deal with those who completely despised these experiences—they did so to try her—for some of these seemed to her to be very much from God. And she did not want them to give definite condemnation of the experiences simply because they didn't see any reason for them. Nor did she want them to act as though everything were from God, for she understood very well that there could be some deception. For this reason it never seemed to her that she could have complete assurance where there could be danger. She tried as hard as she could not to offend God in anything and always to obey. By these two means she thought she could free herself even if her experience were from the devil.

14. From the time she began to receive supernatural experiences, her spirit was always inclined to seek what was most perfect, and it almost habitually had great desires for suffering. In persecutions—for she experienced many—she found consolation and a special love for her persecutors. There was a great desire for poverty and solitude, and to leave this exile so as to see God. Because of these effects and other similar ones, she began to grow calm since it seemed to her that a spirit that left these virtues in her would not be bad. And those with whom she discussed this idea agreed. However, this thought didn't make her stop fearing; but it did help her to advance with less worry. Never did her spirit persuade her to hide anything, but always

to obey.

15. She never saw anything with her bodily eyes, as has been said. But what she saw was so delicate and intellectual that sometimes at the beginning she thought she had imagined it; at other times she couldn't think such a thing. Nor did she ever hear with her bodily ears—except twice; and these times she didn't hear what was being said, nor did she know.

16. These experiences were not continual, but only came sometimes when there was a need, as once when she endured for some days certain unbearable interior torments and a disturbing inner fear about whether the devil was deceiving her, as is explained more at length in the account of her life and also of her sins, in which her sins were made public as were her other experiences. That time, her fear made her forget her worth. And while in this indescribable state of affliction, merely by hearing the words within, "It is I, do not be afraid," the soul was left so quiet and courageous and confident that it couldn't understand where such a great blessing came from. For neither her confessor nor many learned men with many words sufficed to give her that peace and quiet that were given with these words; nor did these learned men suffice at other times, until she was strengthened by some vision. Without this strength she would have been unable to suffer such great trials, contradictions, and sicknesses, which have been without number. And it happens that she is never without some kind of suffering. There is more and less of it; but ordinarily there are always pains with much other sickness, although since she has been a nun she has been afflicted with more suffering.

17. If some service she renders the Lord or the favors He grants her suddenly come to mind, even though she frequently recalls the favors, she cannot think of them for long as she can of her sins, which are always tormenting her like foul-smelling mud. That she committed so many sins and served God so little must be the reason she is not tempted to vainglory.

18. She was never persuaded concerning any spiritual experience of hers unless it was completely clean and chaste, and there was above all a great fear of offending God our Lord and the desire to do His will in everything. This latter she begs of

Him always. And in her opinion she is so determined not to turn from His will that there is nothing her confessors or superiors might tell her about what they think would be of service to God that she would fail to carry out, confident that the Lord helps those who are resolved to render Him service and glory.

19. Relative to this service, she no more thinks of herself or of her own gain than if she did not exist, insofar as she and her confessors understand concerning herself. Everything on this paper is the full truth, and your Reverence can check with her confessors if you want, and with all the persons who have dealt with her during the past twenty years. Very habitually, her spirit moves her to the praises of God; and she would want everyone to be praising Him even were this to cost her a great deal. That all be praising Him is the source of her desire for the good of souls. And upon seeing how the exterior things of this world are like dung, and how precious the interior are—for the two are incomparable—she has come to have little esteem for the things of the world.

20. The kind of vision your Reverence asked me about is a kind in which nothing is seen, neither interiorly nor exteriorly, because the vision is not an imaginative one. But without seeing anything, the soul understands who it is—and even where the representation is—more clearly than if it saw the person, except that nothing in particular is represented. It's as though we were to feel that another is beside us, and because it is dark don't see that person; yet certainly we know the other is there. However this comparison is insufficient, for one who is in darkness knows in some way, either by hearing a noise or having seen the person before, that someone is there, or knows it from previous knowledge. Here, there is nothing of this; but without any exterior or interior word, the soul understands most clearly who it is and where He is, and sometimes the meaning. Where these visions come from, or how, the soul doesn't know; but they happen in this way, and while they last they cannot be ignored. When one of these visions is taken away, no matter how much the soul wants to imagine it as it was, its efforts are to no avail because what it forms is seen to be something imagined and not a presence; for this presence is not in its power

to produce. And so it is with all the supernatural experiences. This inability to produce them is why individuals to whom God grants such a favor don't consider themselves to be anything, for they see that their experience is a gift and that the soul can neither add nor subtract anything. And this leaves the soul with much more humility and much more love of always serving this Lord, so powerful that He can do what we cannot even understand. However much learning one may have, there are things that cannot be grasped.

May He who grants this vision be blessed forever and ever, amen.

59.

(Seville, 1576)¹

The degrees of infused prayer

These inner spiritual experiences are difficult to speak about, and still more so when one wants to speak of them intelligibly. If this writing were not done under obedience, one would be lucky to succeed especially in matters so hard to explain. But such success makes little difference since these words are destined for one who knows other more foolish things about me.

I beg your Reverence to realize that in all things I say it is not my intention to think I am stating them correctly, for I could be mistaken. But what I can certify is that I shall not mention anything I have not sometimes, or many times, experienced. Whether what I say is correct or incorrect, your Reverence may discern and inform me.

2. It seems to me it would be pleasing to your Reverence if from the beginning I started to deal with supernatural experiences, for there is already understanding of the devotion, tenderness, tears, and meditations we can ourselves, with the help of the Lord, procure here below.

3. The first prayer² I experienced that in my opinion was supernatural (a term I use for what cannot be acquired by effort or diligence, however much one tries, although one can dispose oneself for it which would help a great deal) is an *interior recollection* felt in the soul. For it appears that just as the soul has

exterior senses it also has other interior senses through which it seems to want to withdraw within, away from the outside noise. So, sometimes this recollection draws these exterior senses after itself, for it gives the soul the desire to close its eyes and not hear or see or understand anything other than that in which it is then occupied, which is communion with God in solitude. In this state none of the senses or faculties are lost, for all are left intact. But they are left that way so that the soul may be occupied in God. And this explanation will be easy to understand for anyone to whom the Lord has granted this prayer; and for those to whom He has not, there will be need at least for many words and comparisons.

4. A very pleasing *interior quiet* and *peace* sometimes flow from this recollection, so that it doesn't seem to the soul it is lacking anything. Even speaking tires it, I mean reciting vocal prayer and meditating. All it wants is to love. This quiet lasts a short while, and even a longer while.

5. From this prayer there usually proceeds what is called a *sleep of the faculties*, for they are neither absorbed nor so suspended that the prayer can be called a rapture. Although this prayer is not complete union, the soul sometimes, and even often, understands that the will alone is united, and this is known very clearly; I mean it is clear in the soul's opinion. The will is completely occupied in God, and it sees it lacks the power to be engaged in any other work. The other two faculties are free for business and works of service of God. In sum, Martha and Mary walk together. I asked Father Francis³ if this experience could be deceiving because it puzzled me, and he told me that the experience is a frequent one.

6. When there is *union* of all the faculties, things are very different because none of them is able to function. The intellect is as though in awe; the will loves more than it understands, but it doesn't understand in a describable way whether it loves or what it does; there is no memory at all, in my opinion, nor thought; nor even during that time are the senses awake, but they are as though lost, that the soul might be more occupied in what it enjoys. This union passes quickly. By the wealth of humility and other virtues and desires left in the soul, one discerns

the great good that comes to one through that favor. But what the union is cannot be described, for even though the soul is given understanding, it doesn't know how it understands or how to describe it. In my opinion, if this experience is authentic, it is the greatest favor our Lord grants along this spiritual path, at least among the greatest.

7. *Rapture* and *suspension*,⁴ in my opinion, are both the same. But I am used to saying suspension in order to avoid saying rapture, a word that frightens. And indeed the union just described can also be called suspension. The difference between rapture and union is this: the rapture lasts longer and is felt more exteriorly, for your breathing diminishes in such a way that you are unable to speak or open your eyes. Although this diminishing of these bodily powers occurs in union, it takes place in this prayer with greater force, because the natural heat leaves the body, going I don't know where. When the rapture is intense (for in all these kinds of prayer there is a more and a less), when it is greater, as I say, the hands are frozen and sometimes stretched out like sticks, and the body remains as it is, either standing or kneeling. And the soul is so occupied with rejoicing in what the Lord represents to it that it seemingly forgets to animate the body and leaves the body abandoned; and if the suspension lasts, the nerves are left aching.

8. It seems to me the Lord here wants the soul to understand more of what it enjoys in the union. So some things about His Majesty are usually revealed to it in the rapture. And the effects left in the soul are great, and there is a forgetfulness of self in the desire that so tremendous a Lord and God be known and praised. In my opinion, if the suspension is from God the soul cannot remain without a deep awareness of its inability to do anything there and of its great misery and ingratitude for not having served Him who solely out of His goodness grants it such a wonderful favor. For the feeling and sweetness are so excessive that if the remembrance of them didn't pass away, all the comparable satisfactions here on earth would ever be nauseating to the soul. As a result, it comes to have little esteem for all the things of the world.

9. The difference between *rapture* and *transport* is that in rap-

ture the soul only gradually dies to these exterior things and loses its senses and lives to God. The transport comes swiftly through some knowledge the Lord gives in the soul's intimate depths that makes it seem to the soul that its higher part is being carried away; for in its opinion this higher part leaves the body. So courage is necessary in the beginning for the soul to surrender itself into the arms of the Lord to go wherever He may want to bring it. Because until His Majesty places it in peace where He desires to bring it (I say "bring it" by which is understood to lofty things), there is certainly need to be determined to die for Him. For the poor soul doesn't know what that experience is, I mean at the beginning.

10. The virtues, in my opinion, are left much stronger from this experience, for the soul desires and devotes itself more entirely to understanding the power of this great God in order to fear and love Him. Without our being able to resist, He carries the soul away; indeed, as its Lord. It is left with deep repentance for having offended Him, and fright at how it dared to offend such great Majesty, and intense longing that no one offend Him but that all praise Him. I think those extraordinary desires for the salvation of souls, and for taking part in this work, and that God might be praised as He deserves must come from this experience.

11. The *flight of the spirit* is something I don't know what to call that rises up from the most intimate part of the soul. I only remember the following comparison, which I put down in that place your Reverence knows of where these kinds of prayer and others are explained at length;⁵ and my memory is such that I quickly forget. I think the soul and the spirit must be one, but that like a fire that is great and has been getting ready to start blazing, so the soul, through the readiness it has from God does suddenly begin to blaze and shoot forth a flame reaching high in the air, even though the flame is just as much fire as that which remains beneath. This flame doesn't cease to be fire just because it rises up. So here in the soul it seems something is produced so suddenly and delicately that it rises up to the superior part and goes wherever the Lord wills. This cannot be explained any further. It seems to be a flight, for I don't know what else to

compare it to. I know it is recognized very clearly and that it cannot be stopped.

12. It seems that that little bird, the spirit, escapes from the misery of the flesh and the prison of this body, and thus it can be more occupied in what the Lord gives it. What He gives is something so delicate and so precious, from what the soul understands, that there doesn't seem to be any illusion in it or in any of these things when they take place. Afterward there were fears, since the one who received this favor was so wretched that everything seemed to give reason for fearing; although in the interior of the soul there remains a certitude and security that enables one to live, but not to set aside any efforts against being deceived.

13. An *impulse* is what I call a desire that sometimes comes upon the soul, and even very habitually, without any preceding prayer. But suddenly there comes to it a remembrance of its separation from God, or of some word it hears that refers to this separation. This remembrance is so powerful and has such force sometimes that in an instant the soul seems to be beside itself. It's as though you were suddenly given some unknown and very painful news, or like a great and sudden shock that takes away the mind's discursive power to console itself; the mind remains as if absorbed. So it is here, except that the pain serves such a purpose that the soul comes to know that the purpose is worth dying for.

14. The fact is that it seems everything the soul understands then adds to its pain, and that the Lord doesn't want it to profit in its entire being from anything else. Nor does its will appear to be alive, but it seems to be in so great a solitude and so forsaken by all that this abandonment cannot be described in writing. For the whole world and its affairs give it pain, and no created thing provides it with company, nor does it want any company but only the Creator; and it sees that having such company is impossible unless it dies. Since it must not kill itself, it so dies with the longing to die that there is true danger of death; and it finds itself as though hanging between heaven and earth. It doesn't know what to do with itself. And from time to time God gives it a knowledge of Himself in a strange and in-

describable way so that it might see what it is missing. There is no knowledge on earth, at least of what I have received, equal to this divine knowledge. In the half hour this prayer lasts, there is sufficient time to leave the body so disjoined and the arms so straight that the hands can't even write; and the pains are most severe.

15. Nothing of this is felt until that impulse passes. The soul has enough to do in experiencing what is happening interiorly. Nor do I believe it would feel heavy bodily torments. Yet it is in possession of its senses, and it can speak and even see—but not walk because the forceful blow of love prostrates it. But unless God gives this impulse nothing is gained even were one to die for it. It leaves the greatest effect and improvement in the soul. Some learned men explain it one way, others another way; none of them condemns it. The Master Avila wrote me that it was good,⁶ and so says everyone. The soul understands clearly that this impulse is a great favor of the Lord. Were it very frequent one's life would not last long.

16. In the ordinary impulse there comes this extremely tender desire to serve God, along with tearful wishes to leave this exile. But since there is freedom for the soul to consider that it is the Lord's will that it go on living, it is consoled by this thought and offers Him its own life, begging Him that it be for no purpose other than His glory. With this thought the soul can continue on.

17. Another type of prayer quite frequent is a kind of *wound* in which it seems as though an arrow is thrust into the heart, or into the soul itself. Thus the wound causes a severe pain which makes the soul moan; yet, the pain is so delightful the soul would never want it to go away. This pain is not in the senses, nor is the sore a physical one; but the pain lies in the interior depths of the soul without resemblance to bodily pain. Yet, since the experience cannot be explained save through comparisons, these rough comparisons are used (I mean rough when compared to what the experience is); but I don't know how to describe it any other way. For this reason these are not things to be written about or spoken of, because it's impossible to understand them unless one has experienced them. I mention the interior depths this

pain reaches, because spiritual sufferings are extremely different from physical ones. From this fact I deduce how much greater the sufferings of souls in hell and purgatory are than what can be understood of them from bodily sufferings here on earth.

18. At other times, it seems this wound of love rises out of the intimate depths of the soul. Its effects are great. And when the Lord does not provide a remedy, there is none, no matter how much the soul strives to procure one. Nor can the soul resist when the Lord is pleased to provide a remedy. These wounds are like some longings for God, indescribably alive and refined. Since the soul sees it is bound in such a way that it cannot enjoy God as it would like, a great abhorrence for the body comes over it. The body seems like a thick wall impeding the enjoyment of what the soul, in its opinion, knows it possesses within itself at that time without the hindrance of its body. Then it sees the great evil that came upon us through the sin of Adam when this freedom was lost.

19. This prayer was experienced before the raptures and great impulses I mentioned. I forgot to say that those great impulses are almost never taken away unless by a rapture and great favor from the Lord, in which He comforts the soul and encourages it to live for Him.

20. Because of some reasons, which would take a long time to list, none of what has been said can be mere fancy. Whether this wound is good or not the Lord knows. One cannot fail, in my honest opinion, to recognize the effects and the improvement it brings to the soul.

21. I see clearly that the Persons of the Trinity are distinct, as I saw yesterday when your Reverence was speaking with the provincial;⁷ except I do not see or hear anything, as I already mentioned to you. But there is a strange certitude even though the eyes of the soul do not see. And when that presence is gone, the soul is aware that it is gone. The how of this presence I do not know; but I do know very well that the experience is not imagined. For even though afterward I may try vehemently to represent it again, I cannot; and thus it is with everything written down here insofar as I can understand. For since so many years have gone by, one must have been able to see in order

to speak of these things with this certitude.

22. It is true, and your Reverence should take note of this, that I can easily affirm who I think is the Person who always speaks; of the other Persons, I wouldn't be able to affirm that they speak. One of them I know clearly has never done so. I have never understood the reason why, nor do I occupy myself any more in asking about what God wants. For it seems to me that then the devil would deceive me; and neither would I ask now, for I would be afraid of that.

23. The first Person, I think, spoke once; but since I do not recall this clearly now, nor what was said, I wouldn't dare affirm it. Everything is written down in the place your Reverence knows of and in a much more ample way than it is here, although I don't know if it is put in the same words.⁸ Although knowledge is given in a strange manner that these Persons are distinct, the soul understands there is only one God. I don't recall that it seemed to me our Lord spoke unless in His humanity, and as I already said I can affirm that this experience is not the work of imagination.

24. What your Reverence says about water, I don't know; nor have I ever known where the terrestrial paradise is. I have already said I cannot avoid knowing what the Lord gives me knowledge of; I understand because I cannot do otherwise. But I have never asked His Majesty to give me knowledge of anything, for then it would seem to me I had imagined it and that the devil would deceive me. And never, glory to God, did I have a curious desire to know things, nor do I care to know anything more. This was quite a trial to me that without having wanted to know, as I say, I understood; although I think it was a means the Lord made use of for my salvation since I saw I was so wretched. For good people don't have need of so much in order to serve His Majesty.

25. Another prayer I recall, which comes before the first kind I mentioned, is a *presence of God* that is not a vision of any kind. But it seems that when and each time (at least when there is no dryness) one wants to pray to God, even though it be vocal prayer, one finds Him.

May it please God to have mercy on me and that I not lose

through my own fault so many favors.

60.

(Toledo, Aug. — Sept., 1576)
Changing confessors

I had begun to confess to a person in a city where I am at present. But after his having been very kind to me, ever since he accepted the guidance of my soul, he discontinued coming here. While I was in prayer one night thinking about my need for such a person, I understood that God had kept him from coming because it was fitting for me to discuss my soul with another person in this city.¹

To do so was a burden to me because I would have to deal with a person I didn't know. It could turn out that he wouldn't understand me and would disturb me, and I loved the first one who had been doing me this charity. Although, whenever I saw or heard this other person preach he brought me spiritual consolation. But it also seemed to me inappropriate because he had many duties. The Lord said to me: "I shall bring it about that he listen to and understand you. Open your soul to him, for some help will come from your troubles." This latter was said, I think, because I was then extremely weary of being separated from God. Then His Majesty also told me He was clearly aware of my trial, but that it couldn't be otherwise while I lived in this exile, that everything was for my greater good; and He consoled me very much.

So it has come about that this other person is happy to listen to me and finds the time and has understood me and given me great comfort. He is a very learned and holy man.

61.

(Toledo, Nov. 21, 1577)
Perfection and poor health

On the feast of the Presentation while praying to God very intensely for a person, it seemed to me it was still unbecoming the great sanctity I desired for this person that he have his

freedom and an income. I considered his poor health and the abundant light he gave to souls, and I heard: "He serves Me very much, but it is a great thing to follow me stripped of everything as I was on the cross. Tell him to trust in me." He mentioned the latter because I had concluded that this person couldn't reach such perfection with his poor health.

62.

(Toledo, early 1577)

Self-love and the desire for penance

Once while thinking of the distress it caused me to eat meat and not do penance, I understood that sometimes my distress was more a matter of self-love than a desire for penance.

63.

(Toledo, early 1577)

Forgiveness of sins

Once while I was experiencing great distress over having offended God, He said to me: "All your sins are before me as though they were not; in the future make every effort, for your trials are not over."

64.

(Avila, June 6, 1579)

Counsels for the Discalced Fathers

While at St. Joseph's in Avila, on the vigil of Pentecost, I was in the hermitage of Nazareth reflecting upon a very great favor our Lord had granted me on that day, more or less twenty years before,¹ when an intense spiritual impulse and fervor began which caused my faculties to be suspended. In this great recollection I heard from our Lord the following:

That I should tell the Discalced Fathers that for their part they ought to strive to observe four things and that as long as they keep them their religious order will grow, and that when they fail to do so they will be falling away from their original pur-

pose. The first is that their leaders be in accord. The second, that though they have many houses, there be few friars in each. The third, that they speak little with seculars, but that when they do, it be for the good of these persons' souls. The fourth, that they teach by works more than by words.

This happened in the year 1579. And because it is very true, I sign it with my name.

Teresa of Jesus.

65.

(Palencia, 1581)¹

The present state of her spiritual life

Oh, who would be able to explain to your Excellency the quiet and calm my soul experiences! It is so certain it will enjoy God that it thinks it already enjoys the possession of Him, although not the fruition. It's as though one had given another, with heavily warranted deeds, the promise of a large revenue that that other will be able to enjoy at a certain time. But until then, this latter person enjoys only the promise that He shall have the fruition of this revenue. Despite the gratitude the soul feels, it would rather not rejoice. For it thinks it hasn't deserved anything other than to serve, even if this service be through much suffering. And sometimes it even seems to it that the period from now until the end of the world would be a short time to serve the one who gave it this possession. Because, to put it truthfully, this soul is no longer in part subject to the miseries of the world as it used to be. For although it suffers more, this is only on the surface. The soul is like a lord in his castle, and so it doesn't lose its peace; although this security doesn't remove a great fear of offending God and of not getting rid of all that would be a hindrance to serving Him. The soul rather proceeds more cautiously, but it goes about so forgetful of self that it thinks it has partly lost its being. In this state everything is directed to the honor of God, to the greater fulfillment of His will, and to His glory.

2. Since this is so, it seems to me that in what pertains to the soul's body and health there is less mortification and more

carefulness in eating; and in doing penance, the soul doesn't have the desires it did. But everything is, it seems, directed toward having the power to serve God more in other things. For as a great sacrifice it offers Him the care it takes of its body, and this care wearies it very much. At times it tests itself in something; but in its honest opinion it cannot do this without harm to its health, and it keeps in mind what its superiors order it to do. In this respect and in the desire it has for its health, a lot of self-love must also enter in. But, in my opinion, I think it would make me much happier, and it did make me happier, to perform a lot of penance. When I did so, it at least seemed that I was doing something; and I gave good example, and I didn't have this trial that comes from not serving God in anything. May your Excellency discern what might be the best thing to do in this regard.

3. The imaginative visions have ceased, but it seems this intellectual vision of these three Persons and of the humanity of Christ always continues. This intellectual vision, in my opinion, is something much more sublime. Now I understand, as it seems, that those imaginative visions I experienced were from God, for they disposed the soul for its present state. Since it was so miserable and had so little fortitude, God led it as He saw was necessary. In my opinion, when visions are from God they should be greatly prized.

4. The interior locutions haven't gone away, because when it's necessary our Lord gives me some advice; and even now in Palencia I would have made a big blunder, although not one involving sin, if it were not for this.²

5. The acts and desires don't seem to bear the force they used to. Although they are great, much greater is the strength the soul has for doing the will of God and what is for His greater glory. Since it has well understood that His Majesty knows what is fitting for the accomplishment of this, and it is so withdrawn from self-interest, these desires and acts come to an end quickly, and in my opinion they don't have any force. Hence I sometimes feel fear, although not with pain and disturbance as before, that my soul is in a stupor and that I am doing nothing because I cannot do penance. Acts of desire for suffering and

martyrdom and to see God have no force, and I'm usually not able to make them. It seems I live only to eat and sleep and not suffer in anything; and even this doesn't bother me, although sometimes, as I say, I fear lest I be deceived. But I'm not able to believe that I am, because from all that I discern there doesn't reign in me any strong attachment to any creature or to all the glory of heaven, but rather to loving this God of ours. This attachment to loving God doesn't diminish; instead, in my opinion, it increases along with the desire that all serve Him.

6. But besides this love, one thing amazes me: that those interior feelings that were so extreme and used to torment me when I saw souls being lost and I thought about whether some offense was committed against God, cannot be felt by me any longer; although I don't think the desire that He not be offended is any less.

7. Your Excellency should take note that in all these experiences, present or past, I have not had the power to do anything more, nor do I now; I could serve more if I were not so wretched. But I say that if I were now to strive with great care to desire to die, I wouldn't be able to. Nor would I be able to make the acts I used to, or feel the suffering over offenses against God, or feel the fears that were so great and that I bore for so many years because it seemed to me I was being deceived. And as a result I no longer have any need to seek out learned men or tell any one anything. I only need the satisfaction of knowing whether I am going along all right or whether I can do something. I have spoken of this to some with whom I discussed the other things, that is, with Friar Domingo³ and Master Medina⁴ and some from the Society of Jesus.⁵ With what your Excellency might now tell me, I shall put an end to my consultations because of the great esteem I have for you. Consider it carefully for the love of God.

Neither has the knowledge been taken away that some souls whom I'm interested in and that die are in heaven; in the case of others, it has.

8. The solitude that makes one think cannot give that understanding to him who *nursed at my mother's breast*.⁶ The flight into Egypt. . .

9. The interior peace, and the lack of strength that pleasures or displeasures have for taking this peace away in any lasting manner, . . .

The presence of the three Persons is so impossible to doubt that it seems one experiences what St. John says, that they will make their abode in the soul.⁷ God does this not only by grace but also by His presence, because He wants to give the experience of this presence. It brings with it an abundance of indescribable blessings, especially the blessing that there is no need to go in search of reflections in order to know that God is there.

This presence is almost continual, except when a lot of sickness weighs down on one. For it sometimes seems God wants one to suffer without interior consolation; but, never, not even in its first stirrings, does the will turn from its desire that God's will be done in it.

This surrender to the will of God is so powerful that the soul wants neither death nor life, unless for a short time when it longs to die to see God. But soon the presence of the three Persons is represented to it so forcefully that this presence provides a remedy for the pain caused by His absence, and there remains the desire to live, if He wills, in order to serve Him more. And if through my intercession I could play a part in getting a soul to love and praise God more, even if it be for just a short time, I think that would matter more to me than being in glory.

Soliloquies

SOLILOQUIES

INTRODUCTION

One of the distinctive traits of St. Teresa is the spontaneous prayer to God that flows so easily and frequently from her pen. Throughout her works there are many wonderful instances where she shares her prayers with the reader. In the brief and fervent outpourings of this collection, we are able to participate in the prayer of Teresa and contemplate the ardor of the devotee. She laments over the absence of her God, over the time she has lost in living apart from Him, over a life that is an obstacle to perfect union; and she praises God's mercy and grandeur, the adorable humanity of Christ who suffers and seeks souls, Him whose delight is to be with the children of the earth. The meditative, prayerful quality of these writings is expressed in the long descriptive title — a peculiarity of the period — given to the collection by Fray Luis de León in the first edition of the Saint's works published in Salamanca in 1588: *Meditations or exclamations of the soul to God written by Mother Teresa of Jesus in the year 1569 on different days according to the spirit our Lord gave her after Communion*.

Though we don't know exactly where Teresa wrote these meditations, their form and the occasion on which they were written are revealed by Luis de León in the above title. The circumstances in which she wrote them defined their meditative form; but, being spontaneous, they manifest no organised plan. The great number of "oh's" and other vehement utterances make it clear why the first editor referred to them as exclamations. The style of these meditations, however, greatly resembles that found in the soliloquies that have come down to us under the name of St. Augustine. The *Soliloquies*, together with the *Meditations* (both known now as pseudo-Augustinian works), were available in the vernacular in sixteenth-century Spain and bound

together in one volume. They were probably read and reflected on by Teresa. Because of the possible influence of that volume by pseudo-Augustine on these Teresian writings but more particularly because of the similarity of literary genre we have chosen for them the new, but simple, title *Soliloquies* in place of the more elaborate, previously used, *Exclamations of the Soul to God*. The introductory headings to each soliloquy are additions of our own for the convenience of the reader.

Worth noting is that in these few soliloquies there are thirty-six scriptural quotations, mainly from the Gospels, with Teresa's personal insights and interpretations.

The collection is also, in a way, a complement to the *Life*, and so we include it in this first volume. Through these meditations and fervent outpourings Teresa's most intimate religious sentiments reveal themselves to us.

The autograph of this work has not been preserved. A complete copy by Ribera is the one Fray Luis de León probably used and the one followed in this translation.

K.K.

SOLILOQUIES

1

Separation from God

O life, life! How can you endure being separated from your Life? In so much solitude, with what are you occupied? What are you doing, since all your works are imperfect and faulty? What consoles you, O my soul, in this stormy sea? I pity myself, and have greater pity for the time I lived without pity. O Lord, how gentle are Your ways! But who will walk them without fear? I fear to live without serving You; and when I set out to serve You, I find nothing that proves a satisfactory payment for anything of what I owe. It seems I want to be completely occupied in Your service, and when I consider well my own misery I see I can do nothing good, unless You give me this good.

2. O my God and my Mercy! What shall I do so as not to undo the great things You've done for me? Your works are holy, they are just, they are priceless and done with great wisdom, since You, Lord, are wisdom itself. If my intellect busies itself with this wisdom, my will complains. It wouldn't want anything to hinder it from loving You, because the intellect cannot reach the sublime grandeurs of its God. And my will desires to enjoy Him, but it doesn't see how it can since it is placed in a prison as painful as is this mortality. Everything hinders my will, although it was helped by the consideration of your grandeurs, by which my countless miseries are better revealed.

3. Why have I said this, my God? To whom am I complaining? Who hears me but You, my Father and Creator? That You might hear of my sorrow, what need have I to speak, for I so clearly see that You are within me? This is foolish to me. But,

alas, my God, how can I know for certain I'm not separated from You? O my life, how can you live with such little assurance of something so important? Who will desire you, since the gain one can acquire or hope for from you, that is, to please God in all, is so uncertain and full of dangers?

2

Solitude and thirst for souls

Ioften reflect, my Lord, that if there is something by which life can endure being separated from You, it is solitude. For the soul rests in the quiet of solitude; yet, since it is not completely free for the enjoyment of solitude, the torment is often doubled. But the torment arising from the obligation to deal with creatures and from not being allowed to be alone with one's Creator makes the soul consider that first torment a delight. But why is this, my God, that quiet tires the soul that aims only at pleasing You? Oh, powerful love of God, how different are your effects from those of the world's love! This latter love doesn't want company since company would seem to oblige it to give up what it possesses. In the case of the love of my God, the more lovers that love knows there are, the more it increases; and so its joys are tempered by seeing that not all enjoy that good. O my God, what is this that happens: in the greatest favors and consolations coming from You, the memory grieves over the many there are who don't want these consolations and over those who will lose them forever! So the soul looks for ways to find company, and willingly sets aside its joy when it thinks it can be of some help that others might strive to enjoy it.

2. But, my heavenly Father, wouldn't it be more worthwhile to leave aside these desires until a time when the soul has less experience of Your favors, and now be completely occupied in enjoying You? Oh, my Jesus, how great is the love You bear the children of the earth, for the greatest service one can render You is to leave You for their sake and their benefit—and then You are possessed more completely. For although the will isn't so satisfied through enjoyment, the soul rejoices because it is pleasing You. And it sees that while we live this mortal life, earth-

ly joys are uncertain, even when they seem to be given by You, if they are not accompanied by love of neighbor. Whoever fails to love their neighbor, fails to love You, my Lord, since we see You showed the very great love You have for the children of Adam by shedding so much blood.

3

Merciful Redeemer and just Judge

My soul grew greatly distressed, my God, while considering the glory You've prepared for those who persevere in doing Your will, the number of trials and sufferings by which Your Son gained it, and how much in its greatness love, which at such a cost taught us to love, deserves our gratitude. How is it possible, Lord, that all this love is forgotten and that mortals are so forgetful of You when they offend You? O my Redeemer, and how completely forgetful of themselves they are! What great goodness is Yours, that You then remember us, and that though we have fallen through the mortal wound we inflicted on You, You return to us, forgetful of this, to lend a hand and awaken us from so incurable a madness, that we might seek and beg salvation of you! Blessed be such a Lord; blessed be such great mercy; and praised forever such tender compassion!

2. Oh, my soul, bless forever so great a God. How is it possible to turn against Him? Oh, how the greatness of Your favor, Lord, harms those who are ungrateful? May You, my God, provide the remedy. Children of the earth, how long will you be hard of heart! and keep your hearts opposed to this most meek Jesus? What is this? Shall our wickedness against Him perhaps endure? No, for the life of humans comes to an end like the flower of the field, and the Virgin's Son must come to give that terrible sentence.² O my powerful God! Since even though we may not so desire, You must judge us, why don't we consider how important it is to please You before that hour comes? But who, who will not want so just a Judge? Blessed will they be who in that fearful moment rejoice with You, my God and Lord! The soul You have raised up has known how miserably lost it was for the sake of gaining a very brief satisfaction, and it is deter-

mined to please You always. Since You, my soul's Good, do not fail those who desire You or cease to respond to those who call upon You, what remedy, through Your favor, Lord, will You provide that the soul may be able to live afterward and not be dying over the remembrance of having lost the great good it once possessed through the innocence that came from baptism? The best life it can have is to die always with this feeling of compunction. But the soul that loves You tenderly, how can it bear this?

3. Yet, what foolishness I'm asking You, my Lord! It seems I've forgotten Your grandeurs and mercies and how You've come into the world of sinners and have purchased us for so great a price³ and have paid for our false joys by suffering such cruel torments and blows. You have cured my blindness with the blindfold that covered Your divine eyes and my vanity with that cruel crown of thorns!

O Lord, Lord! All this saddens more the one who loves You. The only consolation is that Your mercy will be praised forever when my wickedness is known. Nevertheless, I don't know if this weariness will be taken away until all the miseries of this mortal life are removed by seeing You.

4

Recovering lost time

It seems, my Lord, my soul finds rest in considering the joy it will have if through Your mercy the fruition of Yourself is granted it. But first it would want to serve You since it will be enjoying what You, in serving it, have gained for it. What shall I do, my Lord? What shall I do, my God? Oh, how late have my desires been enkindled and how early, Lord, were You seeking and calling that I might be totally taken up with You! Do You perhaps, Lord, abandon the wretched or withdraw from the poor beggar when he wants to come to You? Do Your grandeurs or Your magnificent works, Lord, perhaps have a limit? O my God and my Mercy, how You can show them now in Your servant! You are mighty, great God! Now it can be known whether my soul understands itself in being aware of the time

it has lost and of how in a moment You, Lord, can win this time back again. It seems foolish to me, since they usually say lost time cannot be recovered. May You be blessed, my God!

2. O Lord, I confess Your great power. If You are powerful, as You are, what is impossible for You who can do everything? Please my Lord, give the order, give the order, for although I am miserable, I firmly believe You can do what You desire. And the more I hear of Your greater marvels and consider that You can add to them, the more my faith is strengthened; and I believe with greater determination that You will do this. What is there to marvel at in what the Almighty does? You know well, my God, that in the midst of all my miseries I never failed to acknowledge Your great power and mercy. May that in which I have not offended You, Lord, help me.

Recover, my God, the lost time by giving me grace in the present and future so that I may appear before You with wedding garments;¹ for if You want to, You can do so.

5

Loving complaints and petitions; Martha's complaint

O my Lord, how does anyone who has so poorly served You and so poorly known how to keep what You have given her dare ask for favors? What can be entrusted to one who has often been a traitor? What, then, shall I do, Consoler of the disconsolate and Cure for anyone who wants to be cured by You? Would it be better, perhaps, to keep still about my needs, hoping You will provide the remedy for them? Certainly not; for You, my Lord and my delight, knowing the many needs there must be and the comfort it is for us to rely on You, tell us to ask you and that You will not fail to give.¹

2. I sometimes remember the complaint of that holy woman, Martha. She did not complain only about her sister, rather, I hold it is certain that her greatest sorrow was the thought that You, Lord, did not feel sad about the trial she was undergoing and didn't care whether she was with You or not. Perhaps she thought You didn't have as much love for her as for her sister. This must have caused her greater sorrow than did serving the

one for whom she had such great love; for love turns work into rest. It seems that in saying nothing to her sister but in directing her whole complaint to You, Lord, that love made her dare to ask why You weren't concerned. And even Your reply seems to refer to her complaint as I have interpreted it, for love alone is what gives value to all things; and a kind of love so great that nothing hinders it is the one thing necessary.² But how can we possess, my God, a love in conformity with what the Beloved deserves, if Your love does not join love with itself? Shall I complain with this holy woman? Oh, I have no reason at all, for I have always seen in my God much greater and more extraordinary signs of love than I have known how to ask for or desire! If I don't complain about the many things Your kindness has suffered for me, I have nothing to complain about. What, then, can so miserable a thing as I ask for? That You, my God, give to me what I might give to You, as St. Augustine says,³ so that I may repay You something of the great debt I owe You; that You remember that I am the work of Your hands; and that I may know who my Creator is in order to love Him.

6

Painful longing for God

O my delight, Lord of all created things and my God! How long must I wait to see You? What remedy do You provide for one who finds so little on earth that might give some rest apart from You? O long life! O painful life! O life that is not lived! Oh, what lonely solitude; how incurable! Well, when, Lord, when? How long? What shall I do, my God, what shall I do? Should I, perhaps, desire not to desire You? Oh, my God and my Creator, You wound and You do not supply the medicine; You wound and the sore is not seen; You kill, leaving one with more life! In sum, my Lord, being powerful You do what You will. Well, my God, do You want so despicable a worm to suffer these contradictions? Let it be so, my God, since You desire it, for I desire nothing but to love You.

2. But, alas, alas, my Creator, what great pain it causes to complain and speak of what has no remedy until You give one!

And the soul so imprisoned wants its freedom, while desiring not to depart one iota from what You want. Desire, my Glory, that its pain increase; or cure it completely. O death, death, I don't know who fears you, since life lies in you! But who will not fear after having wasted a part of life in not loving God? And since I am one of these, what do I ask for and what do I desire? Perhaps the punishment so well deserved for my faults? Don't permit it, my Good, for my ransom cost You a great deal.

3. Oh, my soul! Let the will of God be done; this suits you. Serve and hope in His mercy, for He will cure your grief when penance for your faults will have gained some pardon for them. Don't desire joy but suffering. O true Lord and my King! I'm still not ready for suffering if Your sovereign hand and greatness do not favor me, but with these I shall be able to do all things.

7

Your delight is to be with the children of the earth

O my Hope, my Father, my Creator, and my true Lord and Brother! When I consider how You say that Your delights are with the children of the earth,¹ my soul rejoices greatly. O Lord of heaven and earth, what words these are that no sinner might be wanting in trust! Are You, Lord, perhaps lacking someone with whom to delight that You seek such a foul-smelling little worm like myself? That voice that was heard at the Baptism says You delight in Your Son.² Well, will we all be equal, Lord? Oh, what extraordinary mercy and what favor so beyond our ability to deserve! And that mortals forget all of this! Be mindful, my God, of so much misery, and behold our weakness, since you are the Knower of everything.

2. O my soul: Consider the great delight and great love the Father has in knowing His Son and the Son in knowing His Father; and the enkindling love with which the Holy Spirit is joined with them; and how no one of them is able to be separate from this love and knowledge, because they are one. These sovereign Persons know each other, love each other, and delight in each other. Well, what need is there for my love? Why do You want it, my God, or what do You gain? Oh, may You be

blessed! May You be blessed, my God, forever! May all things praise You, Lord, without end since in You there can be no end.

3. Be joyful, my soul, for there is someone who loves your God as He deserves. Be joyful, for there is someone who knows His goodness and value. Give thanks to Him, for He has given us on earth someone who thus knows Him, as His only Son. Under this protection you can approach and petition Him, for then His Majesty takes delight in you. Don't let any earthly thing be enough to separate you from your delight, and rejoice in the grandeur of God; in how He deserves to be loved and praised; that He helps you to play some small role in the blessing of His name; and that you can truthfully say: *My soul magnifies and praises the Lord.*³

8

Cure the blindness caused by our evil deeds

O Lord, my God, how You possess the words of eternal life,¹ where all mortals will find what they desire if they want to seek it! But what a strange thing, my God, that we forget Your words in the madness and sickness our evil deeds cause! O my God, God, God, author of all creation! And what is creation if You, Lord, should desire to create more? You are almighty; Your works are incomprehensible.² Bring it about, then, Lord, that my thoughts not withdraw from Your words.

2. You say: *Come to me all who labor and are burdened, for I will comfort you.*³ What more do we want, Lord? What are we asking for? What do we seek? Why are those in the world so unhappy if not because of seeking rest? God help me! Oh, God help me! What is this Lord? Oh, what a pity! Oh, what great blindness, that we seek rest where it is impossible to find it! Have mercy, Creator, on these Your creatures. Behold, we don't understand or know what we desire, nor do we obtain what we ask for. Lord, give us light; behold, the need is greater than with the man born blind, for he wanted to see the light and couldn't.⁴ Now, Lord, there is no desire to see. Oh, how incurable an illness! Here, my God, is where Your power must be demonstrated; here, Your mercy.

3. Oh, what a difficult thing I ask You, my true God: that You love someone who doesn't love You, that You open to one who doesn't knock, that You give health to one who likes to be sick and goes about looking for sickness. You say, My Lord, that You come to seek sinners;⁵ these, Lord, are real sinners. Don't look at our blindness, my God, but at all the blood Your Son shed for us. Let Your mercy shine upon evil that has so increased; behold, Lord, we are Your handiwork. May Your goodness and mercy help us.

9

You give living water to the thirsty

O compassionate and loving Lord of my soul! You likewise say: *Come to me all who thirst, for I will give you drink.*¹ How can anyone who is burning in the living flames of cupidity for these miserable earthly things fail to experience great thirst? There is an extraordinary need for water so that one might not be completely consumed by this fire. I already know, my Lord, that out of Your goodness You will give it. You Yourself say so; Your words cannot fail. Well, if those accustomed to living in this fire and to being reared in it, no longer feel it or, like fools, do not succeed in recognizing their great need, what remedy is there, my God? You've come into the world as a remedy for needs such as these. Begin, Lord! Your compassion must be shown in the most difficult situations. Behold, my God, Your enemies are gaining a great deal. Have pity on those who have no pity on themselves; now that their misfortune has placed them in a state in which they don't want to come to You, come to them Yourself, my God. I beg this of You in their name; and I know that as they understand and turn within themselves and begin to taste You, these dead ones will rise.

2. O Life, who gives life to all! Do not deny me this sweetest water that You promise to those who want it. I want it, Lord, and I beg for it, and I come to You. Don't hide Yourself, Lord, from me, since You know my need and that this water is the true medicine for a soul wounded with love of You. O Lord, how many kinds of fire there are in this life! Oh, how true it

is that one should live in fear! Some kinds of fire consume the soul, other kinds purify it that it might live ever rejoicing in You. O living founts from the wounds of my God, how you have flowed with great abundance for our sustenance, and how surely those who strive to sustain themselves with this divine liqueur will advance in the midst of the dangers of this life.

10

Raise up sinners from their death

O God of my soul, how we hasten to offend You and how You hasten even more to pardon us! What reason is there, Lord, for such deranged boldness? Could it be that we have already understood Your great mercy and have forgotten that Your justice is just?

*The sorrows of death surround me.*¹ Oh, oh, oh, what a serious thing sin is, for it was enough to kill God with so many sorrows! And how surrounded You are by them, my God! Where can You go that they do not torment You? Everywhere mortals wound You.

2. O Christians, it's time to defend your King and to accompany Him in such great solitude. Few are the vassals remaining with Him, and great the multitude accompanying Lucifer. And what's worse is that these latter appear as His friends in public and sell Him in secret. He finds almost no one in whom to trust. O true Friend, how badly they pay You back who betray You! O true Christians, help your God weep, for those compassionate tears are not only for Lazarus² but for those who were not going to want to rise, even though His Majesty call them. O my God, how You bear in mind the faults I have committed against You! May they now come to an end, Lord, may they come to an end, and those of everyone. Raise up these dead; may Your cries be so powerful that even though they do not beg life of You, You give it to them so that afterward, my God, they might come forth from the depth of their own delights.

3. Lazarus did not ask You to raise him up. You did it for a woman sinner;³ behold one here, my God, and a much greater one; let Your mercy shine. I, although miserable, ask

life for those who do not want to ask it of You. You already know, my King, what torment it is for me to see them so forgetful of the great endless torments they will suffer, if they don't return to You.

O you who are accustomed to delights, satisfactions, and consolations, and to always doing your own will, take pity on yourselves! Recall that you will have to be subject forever and ever, without end, to the infernal furies. Behold, behold that the Judge who will condemn you now asks you; and that your lives are not safe for one moment. Why don't you want to live forever? Oh, hardness of human hearts! May Your boundless compassion, my God, soften these hearts.

11

The fear of endless torments

Oh, God help me! Oh, God help me! How great a torment it is for me when I consider what a soul that has always here below been valued, loved, served, esteemed, and pampered will feel when after having died finds itself lost forever, and understands clearly that this loss is endless. (Forgetting about the truths of faith will be no help there, as it is here below.) Also what a torment it is for me to consider what a soul will feel when it finds itself separated from what seemingly it will not yet have begun to enjoy (and rightly so, for all that which ends with life is but a breath of wind), and surrounded by that deformed and pitiless company with whom it will always have to suffer. It will be placed in that fetid lake filled with snakes, and the bigger the snake, the bigger the bite; in that miserable darkness where it will only see what gives it torment and pain, without seeing any light other than a dark flame! Oh, how ineffective exaggeration is in expressing what this suffering is!

2. O Lord, who placed so much mud in the eyes of this soul that it has not seen these things before it sees them there? O Lord, who stopped its ears that it didn't hear the many times these things were explained to it or of the eternity of these torments? O life that shall not end! O torment without end! O torment without end! How is it they don't fear you, those who

are afraid to sleep on a hard bed lest they cause their body discomfort?

3. O Lord, my God! I weep for the time I didn't understand; and since You know, my God, the great number who don't want to understand, I now beg You, Lord, let there be at least one, at least one who will see Your light so that many might possess it. Not through my merits, Lord, for I don't deserve it, but through the merits of Your Son. Behold His wounds, Lord, and since He pardoned those who inflicted them,¹ may You pardon us.

12

Those who withdraw from God are sick people

O my God and my true Fortitude! What is this, Lord, that we are cowards about everything except being against You? In opposing You, all the strength of the children of Adam is used up. And if their reason weren't so blind, the reasonings of all together wouldn't suffice for them to dare to take up arms against their Creator, and sustain a continual war against one who in a moment can plunge them into the abyss. But since they are blind, they are like mad people seeking their death because in their imagination it seems to them that by death they gain life. In sum, they are like people without reason. What can we do, my God, with those who have this infirmity of madness? It is said that evil itself brings them great strength. Thus, those who withdraw from my God are sick people because all their fury is turned against You who give them every good.

2. O incomprehensible Wisdom! How necessary is all the love You have for creatures in order to endure so much madness and to wait for our cure and strive to bring it about through a thousand ways and means and remedies! It is something frightening to me when I consider that we lack the strength to be restrained in some very light matter (for they are truly convinced that they are unable to give up an occasion and withdraw from a danger where they may lose their souls), and yet we have strength and courage to attack a Majesty as great as Yours. What is this, my God? What is this? Who gives this strength? Isn't

the captain, whom they follow in this battle against You, Your slave damned to eternal fire? Why does one rise up against You? How does the conquered one give courage? How is it they follow one so poor that he is driven away from the heavenly riches? What can anyone give who has nothing himself, other than a lot of unhappiness? What is this, my God? What is this, my Creator? Where does all this strength against You come from, and all this cowardice against the devil? Such an attitude would be the wrong way to attain what You have kept for us eternally and to realize that all the devil's joys and promises are false and traitorous, even if You, my Prince, did not favor Your own, even if we owed something to this prince of darkness. What can we expect from him who was against you?

3. Oh, great blindness, my God! What extraordinary ingratitude, my King! What incurable madness, that we serve the devil with what You, my God, give us! Shall we repay the great love You bear us by loving the one who so abhors You and must abhor You forever? After the blood You shed for us, and the blows and great sorrows You suffered, and the severe torments You endured, do we, as a substitute for avenging Your heavenly Father (since He doesn't want vengeance, and pardons the great disrespect with which His Son was treated), accept as companions and friends those who disrespectfully treated Him? Since we follow their infernal captain, it is clear we shall all be one and live forever in his company, if Your compassion does not provide a remedy and bring us back to our senses and pardon us for the past.

4. O mortals, return, return to yourselves! Behold your King, for now you will find Him meek; put an end to so much wickedness; turn your fury and your strength against the one who makes war on you and wants to take away your birthright. Turn, turn within yourselves, open your eyes, with loud cries and tears seek light from the one who gave it to the world. Understand for love of God that you with all your strength are about to kill the one who to give you life lost His own. Behold that it is He who defends you from your enemies. And if all this is not enough, let it be enough for you to know that you cannot do anything against His power and that sooner or later you shall

have to pay through eternal fire for such great disrespect and boldness. Why is it you see this Majesty bound and tied by the love He bears us? What more did those who delivered Him to death do, but inflict blows and wounds on Him after He was bound?

5. Oh, my God, how much You suffer for one who grieves so little over Your pains! The time will come, Lord, when You will have to make known Your justice and whether it is the equal of Your mercy. Behold, Christians, let us consider it carefully and we shall never finish understanding the splendor of our Lord's mercies and what we owe Him. For if His justice is so great, alas, what will become of those who have deserved that it be carried out and that it shine forth in them?

13

The souls of the blessed help us in our misery

O souls that without fear already have fruition of your joy and are always absorbed in praises of my God, happy has been your lot! What great reason you have for being ever engaged in these praises. How my soul envies you, for you are already free from the sorrow such terrible offenses committed against my God cause in these unfortunate times, and from the sorrow of seeing so much ingratitude, and seeing that there is no awareness of the multitude of souls carried away by Satan. O blessed heavenly souls! Help our misery and be our intercessors before the divine mercy that we may be given some of your joy and a share in this clear knowledge you possess.

2. Give us understanding, my God, of what it is that is given to those who fight valiantly in the dream of this miserable life. Obtain for us, O loving souls, understanding of the joy it gives you to see the eternal character of your fruition, and how it is so delightful to see certainly that it will have no end. Oh, how fortunate we are, my Lord! For we believe in everlasting joy and know the truth well; but with so pronounced a habit of failing to reflect on these truths, they have already become so foreign to our souls that these souls neither know about them nor desire to know about them. O selfish people, greedy for your pleasures

and delights; not waiting a short time in order to enjoy them in such abundance, not waiting a year, not waiting a day, not waiting an hour—and perhaps it will take no more than a moment—you lose everything, because of the joy of that misery you see present!

3. Oh, oh, oh, how little we trust You, Lord! How much greater the riches and treasures You entrusted to us, since after His thirty-three years of great trials and so unbearable and pitiable a death, You have given us Your Son; and so many years before we were born! Even knowing that we wouldn't repay You, You didn't want to cease trusting us with such an inestimable treasure, so that it wouldn't be your fault, merciful Father, if we fail to acquire what through Him we can obtain from You.

4. O blessed souls who with this precious price knew so well how to profit and buy an inheritance so delightful and permanent, tell us how you gained such an unending good! Help us, since you are so near the fount; draw water for those here below who are perishing of thirst.

14

The love and the wrath of God

O my Lord and true God! Whoever does not know You does not love You. What a great truth this is! But, alas, Lord, there are those who don't want to know You! A dreadful thing is the hour of death. But, alas, my Creator, how frightful will be the day when Your justice will have to be exercised! I often consider, my Christ, how pleasing and delightful Your eyes are to one who loves You; and You, my God, want to look with love. It seems to me that only one such gentle glance toward souls that You possess as Yours is enough reward for many years of service. Oh, God help me, how hard it is to explain this unless to those who have already understood how gentle the Lord is.¹

2. Christians, Christians! Behold the communion you have with this great God; recognize it and don't despise it, for just as this glance is agreeable to His lovers, it is frightful with a terrifying wrath for His persecutors. Oh, how we fail to understand that sin is a battle pitched against God with all our soul's senses

and faculties. He who can commit more sins, invents more treachery against his King. You already know, my Lord, that recalling that I might see Your divine face angered with me on this frightful day of the final judgment caused me greater fear than all the pains and furies of hell shown to me. I beg You that Your mercy may protect me from a thing that would be so sad for me, and thus I beg it of You now, Lord. What can happen to me on earth that would resemble this? I want to possess all, my God. May I not fail to enjoy peacefully so much beauty. Your Father gave You to us, may I not lose, my Lord, so precious a jewel. I confess, eternal Father, I have kept it poorly. But there is still a remedy, Lord, there is still a remedy while we live in this exile.

3. O brothers, O brothers and sons of this God! Let us try hard, let us trust hard, for you know that His Majesty says that if we are sorry for having offended Him our faults and evils will not be remembered.² Oh, compassion so measureless! What more do we desire? Is there by chance anyone who is not ashamed to ask for so much? Now is the time to take what this compassionate Lord and God of ours gives us. Since He desires our friendship, who will deny it to one who did not refuse to shed all His blood and lose His life for us? Behold that what He asks for is nothing, since giving it is for our own benefit.

4. O Lord, God, help me! Oh, what hardness! Oh, what foolishness and blindness! If when something is lost (a needle or a sparrow hawk that isn't worth anything other than to give a little pleasure upon seeing it fly through the air) we feel sad, why don't we feel sad upon losing this royal eagle of God's majesty and a kingdom of endless enjoyment? What is this? I don't understand it. My God, cure such a great foolishness and blindness.

15

The suffering of longing for God

Woe is me, woe is me, Lord, how very long is this exile! And it passes with great sufferings of longing for my God! Lord, what can a soul placed in this prison do? O Jesus, how

long is the life of humans, even though it is said to be short! It is short, my God, for gaining through it a life that cannot end; but it is very long for the soul that desires to come into the presence of its God. What remedy do You provide for this suffering? There isn't any, except when one suffers for You.

2. O gentle Repose of my God's lovers! You don't fail anyone who loves You, since through You the torment the Beloved causes the soul desiring Him must both increase and be mitigated. I desire, Lord, to please You; but my happiness I know well doesn't lie with any mortal beings. Since this is true, You will not blame my desire. See me here, Lord; if it's necessary to live in order to render You some service, I don't refuse all the trials that can come to me on earth, as Your lover St. Martin said.¹

3. But alas, woe is me, Lord, for he had works and I have only words, because I'm not good for anything else! May my desire be worthwhile, my God, before Your divine Presence, and don't look at my lack of merit. May we all merit to love You, Lord. Now that we must live may we live for You, may our desires and self-interests come to an end. What greater thing can be gained than to please You? O my Happiness and my God, what shall I do to please You? Miserable are my services, even though I may have rendered many to my God. Why, then, must I remain in this miserable wretchedness? That the will of the Lord may be done. What greater sin, my soul? Wait, wait, for you know neither the day nor the hour.² Watch with care, for everything passes quickly, even though your desire makes the certain doubtful and the short time long. Behold the more you struggle the more you show the love you have for your God and the more you will rejoice in your Beloved with a joy and delight that cannot end.

16

The wounds of love

Otrue God and my Lord! It is a great consolation for the soul wearied by the loneliness of being separated from You to see that You are everywhere. But when the vehemence of love and the great impulses of this pain increase, there's no remedy,

my God. For the intellect is disturbed and the reason is so kept from knowing the truth of Your omnipresence that it can neither understand nor know. It only knows it is separated from You and it accepts no remedy. For the heart that greatly loves receives no counsel or consolation except from the very one who wounded it, because from that one it hopes its pain will be cured. When You desire, Lord, You quickly heal the wound You have caused; prior to this there is no hope for healing or joy, except for the joy of such worthwhile suffering.

2. O true Lover, with how much compassion, with how much gentleness, with how much delight, with how much favor and with what extraordinary signs of love You cure these wounds, which with the darts of this same love You have caused! O my God and my rest from all pains, how entranced I am! How could there be human means to cure what the divine fire has made sick? Who is there who knows how deep this wound goes, or how it came about, or how so painful and delightful a torment can be mitigated? It would be unreasonable were so precious a sickness able to be mitigated by something so lowly as are the means mortals can use. How right the bride of the Canticles is in saying: *My Beloved is for me and I for my Beloved and my Beloved for me*,¹ for it is impossible that a love like this begin with something so lowly as is my love.

3. Well, if it is lowly, my Spouse, how is it that it is not so lowly in rising from the creature to its Creator? Oh, my God, why "I for my Beloved"? You, my true Lover, have begun this war of love, because this love doesn't seem to be anything else than a restlessness and dereliction on the part of all the faculties and senses; for they go out into the streets and squares entreating the daughters of Jerusalem to tell of their God.² Once, Lord, this battle has begun, who are these faculties to fight against, if not against the one who has been made lord of this fortress where they dwell, which is the highest part of the soul? They are driven out so that they might return to conquer their Conqueror. And now, tired of seeing themselves without Him, they quickly surrender and lose all their forces, and fight better; and by surrendering they win the victory over their Victor.

4. O my soul, what a wonderful battle you have waged in this

pain, and how literally true is what happens here! Since *my Beloved is for me and I for my Beloved*, who will be able to separate and extinguish two fires so enkindled? It would amount to laboring in vain, for the two fires have become one.

17

All my good is in pleasing You

O my God and my infinite Wisdom, measureless and boundless and beyond all the human and the angelic intellects! O love that loves me more than I can love myself or understand! Why, Lord, do I want to desire more than what You want to give me? Why do I want to tire myself in asking You for something decreed by my desire? For with regard to everything my intellect can devise and my desire can want You've already understood my soul's limits, and I don't understand how my desire will help me. In this that my soul thinks it will gain, it will perhaps lose. For if I ask You to free me from a trial, and the purpose of that trial is my mortification, what is it that I'm asking for, my God? If I beg You to give the trial, it perhaps is not a suitable one for my patience, which is still weak and cannot suffer such a forceful blow. And if I suffer it with patience and am not strong in humility, it may be that I will think I've done something, whereas You do it all, my God. If I want to suffer, but not in matters in which it might seem unfitting for Your service that I lose my reputation — since as for myself I don't know of any concern in me about honor — it may be that for the very reason I think my reputation might be lost, more will be gained on account of what I'm seeking, which is to serve You.

2. I could say many more things about this, Lord, in order to explain that I don't understand myself. But since I know You understand these things, why am I speaking? So that when I awaken to my misery, my God, and see my blind reason, I might be able to see whether I find this misery in what I write. How often I see myself, my God, so wretched, weak, and fainthearted. For I go about looking for what your servant has done, since it already seemed to her she had received favors from You to

fight against the tempests of this world. But no, my God, no; no more trust in anything I can desire for myself. Desire from me what You want to desire, because this is what I want; for all my good is in pleasing You. And if You, my God, should desire to please me by fulfilling all that my desire seeks, I see that I would be lost.

3. How miserable is the wisdom of mortals and uncertain their providence!¹ May You through Your providence, Lord, provide the necessary means by which my soul may serve You at Your pleasure rather than at its own. Don't punish me by giving me what I want or desire if Your love, which lives in me always, doesn't desire it. May this "I" die, and may another live in me greater than I and better for me than I, so that I may serve Him. May He live and give me life. May He reign, and may I be captive, for my soul doesn't want any other liberty. How will he be free who is a stranger to the Most High? What greater or more miserable captivity than for a soul to be loosed from the hand of its Creator? Happy are those who with the strong fetters and chains of the kindnesses of the mercy of God find themselves prisoners and deprived of the power to break loose. *Love is strong as death, and unyielding as hell.*² Oh, that I might be slain by Him and thrown into this divine hell where there is no longer any hope of coming out; or better, any fear of finding oneself outside! But, woe is me, Lord; while this mortal life lasts, eternal life is ever in danger!

4. O life at enmity with my good; who has leave to bring you to an end? I bear with you because God bears with you; I maintain you because you are His; do not be a traitor or ungrateful to me.

Nonetheless, woe is me, Lord, for my exile is long!³ Short is all life in exchange for Your eternity; very long is one day alone and one hour for those who don't know and who fear whether they will offend You! O free will, so much the slave of your freedom if you don't live fastened with fear and love of your Creator! Oh, when will that happy day arrive when you will see yourself drowned in the infinite sea of supreme truth, where you will no longer be free to sin! Nor will you want to sin, for you will be safe from every misery, naturalized by the

life of your God!

5. He is blessed, because He knows, loves, and rejoices in Himself without any other thing being possible. He neither has nor can have — nor would He be a perfect God if He did have — the freedom to forget Himself or cease loving Himself. Then, my soul, you will enter into your rest when you become intimate with this supreme Good, understand what He understands, love what He loves, and rejoice in what gives Him joy. Now, you will find you've lost your changeable will; now, there shall be no more change! For God's grace will have done so much that by it you will be so perfect a sharer in His divine nature⁴ that you shall no longer be able, or want to be able, to forget the supreme Good or fail to enjoy Him together with His love.

6. Blessed are those who are written in the book of this life.⁵ But you, my soul, if you are written there, why are you sad and why do you disturb me? Hope in God, for even now I will confess to Him my sins and His mercies.⁶ And putting these all together, I shall make a song of praise with perpetual sighs to my Savior and my God. There may come a day when my glory will sing to Him,⁷ and when my conscience will not feel compunction, where all sighs and fears will have ceased; but in the meantime, in silence and hope will be my strength.⁸ I want to live and die in striving and hoping for eternal life more than for the possession of all creatures and all their goods; for these will come to an end. Don't abandon me, Lord, because I hope that in You my hope will not be confounded;⁹ may I always serve You; and do with me whatever You will.

Notes

Notes to the *Life*

PROLOGUE

1. She is referring to her confessors and the learned men who ordered her to write her *Life*, that is, to Fathers Pedro Ibáñez, O.P., García de Toledo, O.P., Baltasar Alvarez, S.J., etc. For more details about all her confessors see *Spir. Test.*, 58.
2. See *Life*, ch. 37, no. 1.

CHAPTER 1

1. The Saint's father was Don Alonso Sánchez de Cepeda (1480?-1543). His first wife, Dña Catalina del Peso y Henao, died in 1507. In 1509, he married Doña Beatriz de Ahumada (1495?-1529), who was fourteen at the time. She gave birth to St. Teresa, March 28, 1515.
For more detailed information about persons and places mentioned in this book, see E. Allison Peers, *Handbook to the Life and Times of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1954).
2. At that time families belonging to the nobility had at their service Moors who, with limited freedom, remained in Spain after the conquest of Granada by the Catholic monarchs in 1492.
3. There were two from the first marriage: María de Cepeda, born about 1505, and Juan de Cepeda, 1507. From the second marriage, there were ten: Hernando de Ahumada, 1510; Rodrigo de Cepeda, 1511; TERESA DE AHUMADA, 1515; Lorenzo de Cepeda, 1519; Antonio de Ahumada, 1520; Pedro de Cepeda, 1521; Jerónimo de Cepeda, 1522; Agustín de Ahumada, 1527; Juana de Ahumada, 1528; and another child of whom nothing is known.
4. According to a note by Father Gratian on this passage, she is referring to her brother Rodrigo de Cepeda, who sailed to America in 1535 and later died there in battle.
5. Doña Beatriz signed her last will November 24, 1528, and, it is believed, died a little later; so St. Teresa was about fourteen.
6. According to an old tradition, she is referring to a statue of Our

Lady of Charity that was venerated in the hermitage of St. Lazarus, outside the walls of the city, near the river Adaja. After the destruction of the hermitage in the nineteenth century, the statue was moved to the cathedral where it is venerated today.

CHAPTER 2

1. Ch. 1, no. 2.
2. These were adventure stories, very popular in sixteenth-century Spain. They were later ridiculed by Cervantes in *Don Quijote*, Pt. 1, ch. 6.
3. She is probably referring to the sons of Don Hernando Mejía and Doña Elvira de Cepeda, her father's sister. We know of three of them: Vasco, born in 1507; Francisco, 1508; and Diego, 1513.
4. Her half sister, María de Cepeda.
5. It was a convent of Augustinian nuns, named Our Lady of Grace, and it still exists in Avila. In St. Teresa's time, the nuns operated a boarding school where girls from the nobility were prepared for marriage. The intellectual level certainly would not have reached that of the present-day high school. This took place about 1531, when Teresa was sixteen.
6. Her half sister married Don Martín Barrientos in January of 1531. They established their home in a little town about a day's journey northwest of Avila, called Castellanos de la Cañada.
7. This nun was Doña María de Briceño y Contreras. She was in charge of the girls, who slept in large dormitories.

CHAPTER 3

1. Mt. 22:14.
2. Juana Suárez, according to Gratian. She was a nun at the Carmelite monastery of the Incarnation in Avila.
3. See ch. 2, note 6.
4. This uncle was Don Pedro Sánchez de Cepeda, widower of Doña Catalina del Aguila. He lived in the little town of Hortigosa, near the town in which Teresa's sister lived. Later he retired to the monastery of the Jeronimites, and it was there he died.
5. See ch. 1, no. 4.
6. St. Jerome's letters were translated into Spanish by Juan de Molina and first published in Valencia in 1520.

CHAPTER 4

1. This happened about 1535 when she was twenty. The brother

- was Antonio de Ahumada, who applied to the Dominicans but was unable to convince them to accept him without paternal consent. He then joined the Jeronimites but did not persevere for lack of health. He went to America and died in Quito (Ecuador) from wounds received in the battle of Iñaquito, January 20, 1546.
2. Her friend was Juana Suárez (ch. 3, note 2). Teresa entered the monastery of the Incarnation November 2, 1535, when twenty-one years old.
 3. According to the rules, the clothing took place after one year of postulancy; in St. Teresa's case, November 2, 1536. The prioress of the Incarnation was Doña Mencía Cimbrón, a distant relative of Teresa's.
 4. She made her religious profession after one year of novitiate, that is, November 3, 1537.
 5. A little town called Becedas, about fifty miles southwest of Avila. It was there that the much talked about quack doctor resided.
 6. Juana Suárez.
 7. See ch. 5, no. 7.
 8. María de Cepeda. See ch. 3, no. 3.
 9. Pedro Sánchez de Cepeda. See ch. 3, no. 4.
 10. This was the distinguished spiritual work by the Franciscan, Fray Francisco De Osuna. It was published in Toledo in 1527. The copy used by St. Teresa can be seen in St. Joseph's monastery at Avila. It is without doubt one of the books that left the deepest impression on her. In 1931, it was translated into English by a Benedictine of Stanbrook. *Third Spiritual Alphabet* (London: Burns Oates, 1931).
 11. She is referring to the path of the prayer of recollection as taught in Osuna's book. As for the gift of tears, see ch. 11, no. 9. She goes on to speak in this number of the prayer of quiet and of the prayer of union. These are two higher degrees of prayer about which she speaks in chapters 14-15 and 18-22 respectively.
 12. By this time, she was close to twenty-three.

CHAPTER 5

1. From Castellanos de la Cañada to Becedas. See ch. 4, no. 6.
2. Juana Suárez.
3. Father Vicente Barrón, confessor to her family and an outstanding theologian.
4. Not the Dominican Father, but the priest of Becedas, whose name was Pedro Hernández.

5. See above, no. 4.
6. She is referring here to the *Morals of St. Gregory, Pope, Doctor of the Church*. This was the Spanish translation from the Latin, done by Alonso Alvarez de Toledo and published in Seville in 1514. The Carmelites of St. Joseph's in Avila have a copy of this two-volume work. The second volume bears the notation: "These Morals were those used by Our Holy Mother, and during the hours of sleep she rested her holy head upon them; and some of the marks she made with her holy hands to note the things that stirred her devotion."
7. Jb. 2:10.
8. August 15-19, 1539, when she was twenty-four. See ch. 6, no. 1.
9. She is referring probably to the popular custom, still existing in some small towns in Castile, of closing the eyes of the dead with a few drops of wax from the candle used during the death agony.

CHAPTER 6

1. See ch. 5, no. 9.
2. A term to denote a fever that increased, along with chills, every fourth day. They were called the tertian fevers if they increased every other day.
3. This happened about the end of August, 1539.
4. From the middle of 1539 to about April of 1542. She attributed her cure to St. Joseph. See nos. 6-8.
5. Ga. 2:20.

CHAPTER 7

1. This passage is further clarified in no. 14: "... I who was sicker in soul, steeped in many vanities, than he was in body; although, during this entire more lax period of which I am speaking, never so steeped in them — insofar as I understood — as to be in mortal sin."
2. The monastery of the Incarnation, not St. Joseph's.
3. Probably Doña Mencía Cimbrón, prioress of the Incarnation during Teresa's novitiate year.
4. No. 3.
5. Ch. 1, no. 1.
6. See ch. 8, no. 5; ch. 19, nos. 4, 10-15.
7. Don Alonso died December 24, 1543.
8. Father Vicente Barrón, O.P.
9. Father García de Toledo, O.P.

CHAPTER 8

1. See nos. 1-2; ch. 5, no. 11; ch. 7, no. 22.

CHAPTER 9

1. Not a statue of Christ bound to the column as has been thought, but an *ecce homo* that is still venerated at the monastery of the Incarnation in Avila.
2. She probably had the translation done by the friar, Sebastián Toscano. This was published in Salamanca in 1554, the same year of her spiritual conversion.
3. The Augustinian nuns of Our Lady of Grace.
4. Confessions, VIII, ch. 12.
5. This conversion, as the event has been called, took place during Lent of 1554, when she was thirty-nine.
6. The experiences related in nos. 1 and 8.

CHAPTER 10

1. Reference to her confessors and particularly to Father Gracia de Toledo O.P., to whom she addresses her *Life*.
2. In ch. 9, no. 9; ch. 4, no. 7.
3. In ch. 13, no. 4.
4. See note 1.
5. In ch. 13, no. 17; ch. 22, no. 3; ch. 28, no. 6.

CHAPTER 11

1. Chapters eleven to twenty-two comprise a small treatise on mental prayer and its degrees; the tone changes from autobiographical to didactic. They prepare the reader for an understanding of what she will begin to speak of in ch. 23.
2. In ch. 12, no. 5. In ch. 18, no. 2, she mentions the difficulty she has with understanding and using the proper terminology.
3. The source of this allegory is not known with any certitude. See ch. 14, no. 9.
4. According to Ribera there was a water wheel in the house in which she grew up.
5. Most probably she is referring to Fr. García de Toledo.
6. In ch. 13, nos. 14-15; ch. 15, no. 6, etc.
7. See *Letters of St. Jerome*, Letter 22: to Eustochium.
8. Mt. 11:30.

CHAPTER 12

1. She uses terms common among the spiritual writers of her times, but with her own nuances. See Osuna, *Third Spiritual Alphabet*, IX, ch. 8; Bernardino de Laredo, *The Ascent of Mount Sion*, trans. E. A. Peers (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1950), ch. 41. For St. Teresa, "supernatural" corresponds roughly to "mystical" or "infused." See *Spiritual Testimonies*, 5, no. 3.
2. A very popular book by a Franciscan friar, Alonso de Madrid, published in Seville, 1521.
3. She is referring to the Dominican Fathers, Pedro Ibáñez, García de Toledo, and Domingo Báñez; to Baltasar Alvarez, S.J.; to Master Gaspar Daza; and also perhaps to the Bishop Don Alvaro de Mendoza.
4. See ch. 34, no. 7.
5. In ch. 10, no. 1; ch. 11, no. 5.

CHAPTER 13

1. Ch. 11, nos. 15-16.
2. References are to: Ph. 4:13; *Confessions*, X, ch. 29; Mt. 14:29-30.
3. In ch. 7, no. 17 *et passim*.
4. In ch. 7, no. 10ff.
5. According to Gratian, the three were: María de San Pablo, a nun at the Incarnation; Ana de los Angeles, a nun at the Incarnation who went with St. Teresa on the new foundation in Avila and became the first prioress there; and María de Cepeda y Ocampo, a lay woman who lived at the Incarnation (see ch. 32, no. 9) and also joined Teresa on the new foundation.
6. In the latter part of the book, chs. 32-36.
7. In ch. 12, no. 2.
8. In no. 11; ch. 12, no. 2.
9. Jn. 14:2.
10. See ch. 15, no. 12.
11. In no. 12; ch. 11, no. 6.
12. This was the opinion of St. Peter of Alcántara and others. They held that in matters pertaining to the perfection of the spiritual life one should consult those who are living this life, and not jurists and theologians.
13. Good judgment, experience, and learning. See no. 16.

CHAPTER 14

1. See no. 7; ch. 15 *passim*.

2. In no. 6.
3. The new monastery she founded, St. Joseph's in Avila. She gives an account of this foundation in chapters 32-36. The little community was extremely poor.
4. Reference to the Arabic spoken by the Moors who remained in Spain and which was unintelligible to Castilians.
5. Pr. 8:31.
6. She is addressing Father García de Toledo, O.P.
7. Biblical allusion to Lk. 7:47.

CHAPTER 15

1. Mt. 17:4.
2. Biblical allusion to Ex. 16:3.
3. In nos. 2-3.
4. See ch. 18, no. 2; ch. 32, nos. 2-3.
5. See no. 2.
6. Biblical allusion to Mt. 25:25.
7. In no. 3.
8. In no. 6.
9. Lk. 18:13.
10. In no. 4.
11. See ch. 11, nos. 12-16; ch. 12, no. 3.
12. In ch. 13, no. 15.
13. In no. 11.
14. Mt. 16:24.

CHAPTER 16

1. She continues to address Father García de Toledo, O.P.
2. Lk. 15:9.
3. See 2 S. 6:14. The feast of King David was approved for the Carmelite liturgical calendar in 1564 and was celebrated November 29.
4. Her motherly way of addressing García de Toledo, O.P.
5. Among the five were certainly the Dominican, García de Toledo, and the saintly layman, Francisco de Salcedo (see ch. 23, no. 6). Two other possible ones were: her friend and benefactress, Dña Guiomar de Ulloa (see ch. 24, no. 4); and the pious, learned priest and confessor, Gaspar Daza (see ch. 23, no. 6.)

CHAPTER 17

1. García de Toledo, O.P.

2. See ch. 14, no. 2.
3. She distinguishes, then, three kinds of union: the union just mentioned (the lowest kind, no. 4); another higher kind, but still not complete union (no. 5); and the complete union, "that which was mentioned in reference to this third water" (ch. 16 *passim*).
4. She refers to the memory and the imagination without distinguishing them from each other.
5. In ch. 14, no. 3, ch. 15, nos. 6-9. Although in the latter reference, she seems to refer preferably to the intellect, it should be remembered that Teresa doesn't always make clear distinctions between the intellect and the imagination.
6. Gn. 29:20-30.
7. In no. 5.
8. In ch. 16, no. 3; ch. 17, nos. 2-3.
9. In nos. 4-5.

CHAPTER 18

1. One of her censors, probably Father Báñez, crossed out this last sentence of the chapter heading. He was possibly somewhat bothered by the high estimate the Saint had of her own work. But this is an excellent example of the ingenuous way in which she composed her chapter headings. See Chs. 14, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25 and almost all the chapters in the *Interior Castle*.
2. In ch. 16, nos. 1 ff. She means that in the third water there is no ecstatic suspension of either the faculties or the senses.
3. She refers to the prayer of quiet also in this way (see ch. 14, no. 1). She is using terminology learned from books read in her time, particularly Laredo's *Ascent of Mount Sion* (see ch. 12, note 1).
4. Ps. 92:6; 104:24.
5. Biblical allusion to 2 Co. 4:7.
6. Allusion to Mt. 25:18.
7. "Elevation of the spirit," "joining with heavenly love," "flight of the spirit," "rapture," "suspension," and "transport" are analogous terms which in Teresa's spiritual language are the equivalent of ecstasy, although with slight differences. See ch. 20, no. 1.
8. See ch. 16, no. 2.
9. It was a custom at the joust for one in a group of supporters to hold up a banner bearing the colors of the group's favorite knight. In this prayer, it is the will that continues in act even when the other two faculties falter.
10. The two faculties are the intellect and the memory. The mystical

terminology is inspired by the *Song of Songs*. A fluctuating between the prayer of the sleep of the faculties (the third water) and the prayer of ecstasy (the fourth water) is what is designated by this imagery.

11. In nos. 10, 13.
12. According to Father Gratian, she is referring here to Father Vicente Barrón, O.P.

CHAPTER 19

1. See ch. 7, no. 11. This was so important a fact to her in the story of her interior life that she refers to it a number of times.
2. Saints Peter, Paul, Augustine, and Mary Magdalene, favorite intercessors for Teresa.
3. Probable allusion to Lutheran doctrine which held that justification does not take away sin but only covers the wounds of sin.
4. Ps. 119:137.
5. In no. 6.
6. In chs. 25-27.
7. There follows a series of allusions to the temptation to which she yielded of abandoning prayer. See no. 4; ch. 7, no. 11.
8. Father Vicente Barrón, according to Father Gratian. See ch. 7, no. 17.
9. See ch. 20, no. 22; ch. 21, no. 11.
10. See ch. 20, nos. 22-29; ch. 21, no. 11.
11. In nos. 3-5, 10; ch. 7, no. 11.
12. In no. 4.
13. Allusion to biblical passages in which the Lord promises pardon to the sinner; Ezk. 33:11; Mt. 9:13; Lk. ch. 15.

CHAPTER 20

1. Some words of St. John of the Cross are worth noting here: "This would be an apt place to treat of the different kinds of raptures, ecstasies, and other elevations and flights of the soul. . . . Then too, the Blessed Teresa of Jesus, our Mother, left writings about these spiritual matters, which are admirably done and which I hope will soon be printed and brought to light." See *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, trans. K. Kavanaugh, O.C.D. and O. Rodriguez, O.C.D. (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1973), p. 460. St. John of the Cross promoted publication of the writings of St. Teresa in a council meeting, September 1, 1586.
2. In ch. 18, nos. 1,9; ch. 19, no. 1.

3. She adds in the margin: "I have heard that this is so, that the clouds gather up the vapors; or the sun 'does.'"
4. The feast of St. Joseph.
5. Later she again experienced ecstasies, raptures, and levitations. See *Spir. Test.*, 12 and 31; also her letter to Don Lorenzo de Cepeda, January 17, 1577.
6. She writes of these visions and revelations in chs. 27, 28, 29, 32, 38, 39, 40.
7. See ch. 29, 8-14.
8. When she writes in Latin, Teresa spells the words according to the way they were pronounced by Castilians, e.g., "*vigilavi ed fatus sun sicud passer solitarius yn tecto.*" Ps. 102:8.
9. Ps. 42:4.
10. Ga. 6:14.
11. In no. 9.
12. In chs. 4 and 5.
13. In nos. 7, 9.
14. In the margin after the last lines, she makes the annotation: "I mean that these impulses come after the favors here mentioned that the Lord granted me."
15. She began to speak of raptures in no. 1, and continued until the subject of levitation came up in no. 5. In nos. 9-16 she speaks of that strange solitude and infused prainful prayer.
16. See ch. 18, no. 12.
17. The suspension of the corporeal functions and the lightness of the body of which she speaks in no. 18.
18. Ch. 18, no. 12.
19. Avila.
20. See chs. 23 and 24.
21. St. Vincent Ferrer, O.P., writes: "And know for certain that the greater part of the raptures, indeed rabies, of the messengers of the Antichrist comes in this way." *Tractatus de Vita Spirituali* (Madrid, BAC, 1956), ch. 14.
22. Ps. 55:7.
23. Ps. 143:2.

CHAPTER 21

1. Teresa takes up again the theme of both the effects and the spiritual state that correspond to the fourth degree of prayer. She began to speak of this in ch. 19, no. 1, and returns to it in ch. 20, nos. 7, 23. She concludes in this chapter.

2. Reference to an old popular belief that when an important person dies there are signs in the sky, as happened at the death of our Lord. See Mt. 27:45.
3. See no. 1; ch. 20, nos. 22, 26.
4. Rm. 7:24.
5. In no. 5; ch. 20, no. 25.
6. In ch. 19, nos. 6-10; ch. 18, no. 4; ch. 15, no. 7; ch. 10, no. 4.

CHAPTER 22

1. Jn. 16:7. In the margin she adds: "It seems to me that if they had faith that He was both God and man as they did after the Holy Spirit came, this would not have hindered them; for these words were not spoken to the Mother of God, even though she loved Him more than all of them."
2. The clause beginning with the words, "that is," is a clarification St. Teresa added in the margin.
3. In ch. 28.
4. The second reason will appear in nos. 9-10.
5. Jn. 19:26.
6. Mt. 3:17.
7. Jn. 10:9.
8. This is the first time that in addressing Father García de Toledo she alludes to his title of lord. He merited this title because he was a nephew of the Count of Oropesa. The title provides further evidence that it was to this Dominican priest that she addressed herself throughout her book.
9. In chs. 18 ff.
10. In no. 5.
11. Biblical allusion to Lk. 10:42.
12. In ch. 11, no. 13; ch. 12, no. 3.
13. In no. 9.
14. In no. 9.
15. Lk. 5:8.
16. In nos. 2, 8.
17. In ch. 11, no. 10.
18. In ch. 14.
19. Lk. 14:10.
20. Lk. 10:39. The last clause alludes to the legend about St. Mary Magdalene. Following St. Gregory the Great, the Latin Church, generally but not universally, has in the past identified Mary Magdalene with the repentant woman of Lk. 7:36-50 and with

Mary of Bethany of Jn. 11.

21. Mk. 10:29-30.

22. In no. 5.

CHAPTER 23

1. She takes up again the account of her life, which she interrupted in ch. 11 for her little treatise on the degrees of prayer.
2. A reference to the *autos de fe* against the Illuminists held by the Inquisition in various cities, such as Córdoba, Seville, and Valladolid, during the sixteenth century.
3. The Jesuit fathers made their foundation, named after St. Giles, in Avila about 1554.
4. In no. 3.
5. See ch. 7, no. 1.
6. Maestro Gaspar Daza, a diocesan priest in Avila. See ch. 16, no. 7; ch. 36, no. 18.
7. Don Francisco de Salcedo, who became one of Teresa's closest friends. His wife was Doña Mencía del Aguila, a cousin of the wife of Teresa's uncle Don Pedro Sánchez, who had introduced Teresa to spiritual books (ch. 3, no. 4; ch. 4, no. 7). Don Francisco attended classes in theology at the Dominican College of St. Thomas in Avila for a period of twenty years. He was an authentically spiritual man, and after his wife died he became a priest.
8. Don Alonso Alvarez Dávila.
9. In no. 5.
10. Bernardino de Laredo's *Ascent of Mount Sion*. See *Life*, ch. 12, note 1. Laredo was a Franciscan Brother who had been a physician before entering the religious life. His book was first published in Seville in 1535.
11. See ch. 28, nos. 5-6, *et passim* in the final chapters.
12. A marked copy of the *Ascent of Mount Sion* and her first *Spiritual Testimony*, or autobiographical account, which has been lost.
13. 1 Co. 10:13.
14. Another autobiographical account, lost as was the previous one.
15. Father Diego de Cetina, S.J., Teresa's confessor during the summer of 1555. See ch. 24, no. 1.

CHAPTER 24

1. The Incarnation in Avila.
2. St. Francis Borgia, S.J., (1510-1572). After succeeding his father

as fourth Duke of Gandía, he joined the Society of Jesus and renounced his titles and estates. In 1565 he was elected the Society's third general. It is believed that he first met Teresa during the summer of 1555. Teresa says that she met him twice. See *Spir. Test.*, 58, no. 3.

3. Father Diego de Cetina, S.J., St. Teresa's first Jesuit confessor. He remained in Avila for only a few months, so he could not have directed her for long.
4. Father Diego de Cetina, S.J.
5. Doña Guiomar de Ulloa. Her husband left her a small fortune which she used largely for charity. She provided a great part of the income for Teresa's new foundation of St. Joseph's, Avila. Later on she tried the Carmelite life at St. Joseph's, but for lack of health had to leave.
6. Father Juan de Prádanos, S.J., who was also confessor of Doña Guiomar.
7. This was St. Teresa's first rapture; it took place either in 1556 or 1558. She speaks of her first vision in ch. 7, no. 6, and of her first locution in ch. 19, no. 9. For about two years she resisted the raptures and locutions (ch. 25, no. 15; ch. 27, nos. 1-2).

CHAPTER 25

1. Here we have a communication of verbal knowledge in contrast to the pure, distinct knowledge of the intellectual vision. See ch. 27, no. 6.
2. See ch. 13, no. 3.
3. In nos. 2-3.
4. Not in the second but in the fourth water. See ch. 18, nos. 1 ff; ch. 20, nos. 3 ff.
5. It is helpful to recall here St. Teresa's teaching about ecstasy in chs. 18 and 20, especially in ch. 18, nos. 12-13.
6. In no. 4.
7. In nos. 1 and 6.
8. In ch. 23.
9. In ch. 31. See also ch. 32, no. 1; ch. 36, nos. 7-11; ch. 38, 23-24; ch. 39, no. 4.
10. In ch. 7, nos. 6-7.
11. They were probably Gaspar Daza, Gonzalo de Aranda, Juan de Prádanos, S.J., and the two lavinen, Francisco de Salcedo and her cousin, Don Alonso Alvarez Dávila.
12. Either Juan de Prádanos, S.J. or Baltasar Alvarez, S.J.

13. In ch. 23, no. 13.
14. Mk. 4:39.
15. See chs. 31, 32, 38 and 39.
16. A gesture of contempt made by placing the thumb between the first and second fingers and pointing it at the scorned object from the tip of one's nose.

CHAPTER 26

1. In ch. 25, no. 1.
2. She will speak of this in ch. 29, nos. 8-14, and has already spoken of it in ch. 20, nos. 9-14 and ch. 21, no. 6.
3. She is referring to her foundation of St. Joseph. See ch. 36.
4. In ch. 25, nos. 3 and 18.
5. Baltasar Alvarez, S.J. See ch. 28, no. 14.
6. In 1559, Don Fernando de Valdés, the Inquisitor General, published an Index of forbidden books, among which were some spiritual books written in the vernacular that he thought could be harmful to simple souls.

CHAPTER 27

1. In ch. 25, no. 15.
2. In ch. 24, no. 5; ch. 25; ch. 26, nos. 2 and 5.
3. It was an intellectual vision. St. Teresa will distinguish at least three kinds of visions: intellectual (like the present one, which she will describe in her own way in no. 3); imaginative (perceived with what she calls "the eyes of the soul," that is, the imagination or phantasy, and described in ch. 28); and corporeal (seen with the bodily eyes and which she says, in ch. 28, no. 4, she never experienced). She is very free in the use of language; so in speaking of the intellectual vision, she says she felt this vision.
4. In nos. 16-20; ch. 30, nos. 2-7.
5. In ch. 25.
6. In nos. 2ff. She distinguishes three kinds of locutions: those that are explicit and heard with the sense of hearing; those that are explicit but not heard with the bodily ears, although they are understood much more clearly than if heard (see ch. 25); those that are not explicit, just as in heaven one understands without speaking: "God and the soul understand each other only through the desire His Majesty has that it understand Him, without the use of any other means. . . ." (see ch. 27, no. 10). It is of this latter that she now begins to speak.

7. She begins to list them in the following number, but loses the thread and does not return to them until ch. 29, no. 1.
8. In ch. 25 *passim*.
9. Sg. 4:9; 6:5.
10. Rm. 2:11.
11. Lk. 23:27; Mt. 27:32.
12. See no. 14; ch. 16, nos. 1, 4, 8; ch. 21 *passim*.
13. She is referring to Venerable María Díaz (1495-1572). This pious woman was guided by St. Peter of Alcántara and was renowned in Avila for her sanctity.
14. In no. 3; ch. 30; ch. 36, no. 20.
15. He was born in 1499 and died in 1562. If this meeting took place in 1558, he was only fifty-nine, hardly very old. She is probably judging by appearance.
16. Ps. 122:1. Teresa, to give another example of her manner of spelling Latin, wrote thus: *letatum sun yn is que dita sun miqui*. See ch. 20, note 8.

CHAPTER 28

1. That is, to the vision spoken of in ch. 27, nos. 2-5.
2. She is referring to a first account of her spiritual experiences made for García de Toledo, which has been lost. This vision of the sacred humanity of Christ took place most probably on the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, January 25, 1561.
3. In ch. 29, no. 7.
4. In ch. 10, no. 9; ch. 13, no. 18.
5. In ch. 30, nos. 12, 15, 18.
6. In ch. 27, no. 2.
7. In this same number 10.
8. In ch. 27, nos. 7 ff.
9. In no. 4.
10. Baltasar Alvarez, S.J. He was twenty-five or twenty-six when he undertook the direction of St. Teresa.
11. He was her confessor for six years according to her own account in *Spir. Test.*, 58, no. 3. The first three difficult years to which she refers here must have been from 1558-1561.
12. See ch. 25, no. 14.

CHAPTER 29

1. In ch. 27, no. 7 she began to explain why the devil interferes least in the intellectual vision, and the language God speaks without

explicit words.

2. In nos. 8-14.
3. According to Gratian, she is referring to Gonzalo de Aranda.
4. In no. 4; ch. 27, no. 1.
5. June 29. See ch. 27, no. 2; ch. 28, no. 3.
6. In no. 8; ch. 30, nos. 8 ff; ch. 34, no. 16.
7. See no. 6.
8. In ch. 20, nos. 9 ff.
9. In nos. 8 and 10.
10. Ps. 42:2.
11. In ch. 27, no. 2. She does not mean she had a corporeal vision but an imaginative one. See ch. 28, no. 4, where she says she never experienced corporeal visions.
12. In ch. 20, nos. 9 ff.

CHAPTER 30

1. In ch. 27, nos. 16-20.
2. She is probably alluding to the *Treatise on Prayer & Meditation*, trans. D. Devas, O.F.M. (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press 1949). But the authenticity of this work and others has been challenged.
3. Doña Guiomar de Ulloa. See ch. 24, no. 4.
4. In ch. 28, no. 4.
5. The confessor was Baltasar Alvarez, S.J. The gentleman was Francisco de Salcedo.
6. She is referring to the Franciscan semi-province that bore the title of St. Joseph.
7. In no. 8.
8. Jb. 2:6.
9. Baltasar Alvarez, S.J., according to Gratian.
10. In ch. 25, no. 18; ch. 26, no. 2.
11. It is worth recalling that St. Teresa does not always distinguish clearly between intellect, thought, and imagination.
12. In ch. 29, nos. 8-14; ch. 26, no. 1.
13. Jn. 4:15.
14. In ch. 10, no. 7; ch. 14, no. 8.

CHAPTER 31

1. In ch. 30, nos. 9 ff.
2. Domingo Báñez, O.P., according to Gratian.
3. The diabolical interventions mentioned in no. 6.

4. In the monastery of St. Joseph.
5. She is referring to an intellectual vision, which she explains in ch. 27, no. 2.
6. In note 1; ch. 30, nos. 9 ff.
7. Domingo Báñez.
8. It is difficult to identify. Some think it was located outside Spain; others think it was in Spain—perhaps the Incarnation at Valencia.
9. See ch. 22, no. 13.
10. In the rest of the chapter she addresses García de Toledo, O.P., more expressly. It is he with whom she keeps up a dialogue throughout almost the whole book.
11. Her youngest sister, Doña Juana de Ahumada, who with her husband came to Avila from Alba de Tormes. She had marriage difficulties because of her husband's troublesome temperament and because of financial problems.
12. In ch. 30, no. 20.

CHAPTER 32

1. In chaps. 23-31.
2. See ch. 6, nos. 1-2.
3. In chaps. 30-31.
4. A reference to the bull *Romani Pontificis* of Eugene IV, February 15, 1432. See ch. 36, no. 26. For the text of this bull see *Monumenta Historica Carmeli Teresiani*, ed. Eulogio Pacho *et al.* (Rome, Teresianum, 1973) I, 459-461. (Henceforth cited as *Monumenta*.)
5. We know the names of almost everyone in the group. The one who mentioned the idea was María de Ocampo, a daughter of Teresa's cousin. She joined the Carmelite nuns at St. Joseph's and took the name María Bautista. Almost all the others in the group were likewise relatives of Teresa; some were Carmelites, others, lay friends. They used to gather in Teresa's cell at the monastery of the Incarnation. The group included: Beatriz de Cepeda, Leonor de Cepeda, María de Cepeda, Isabel de San Pablo, Inés de Tapia, Ana de Tapia, and Juana Suárez. María de San José writes: "One day the Saint together with María de Ocampo and other nuns from the Incarnation began to discuss the saints of the desert. At this time some of them said that since they couldn't go to the desert, they should found a little monastery with few nuns and that there they could join together to do penance." By the discalced, María de Ocampo was referring to the *Descalzas Reales*, Franciscan nuns founded in Avila by Philip

II's sister, Princess Doña Juana, who followed St. Peter of Alcántara's initiative.

6. Doña Guiomar de Ulloa, already mentioned in ch. 24, no. 4; ch. 30, no. 3.
7. The monastery of the Incarnation.
8. Baltasar Alvarez, S.J.
9. This written account has been lost.
10. Angel de Salazar, who in 1560 succeeded Gregorio Fernández as provincial of Castile.
11. Later on Teresa changed her mind and allowed for a larger number of nuns in her monasteries.
12. Pedro Ibáñez, O.P.
13. See ch. 35, nos. 4-6; ch. 36, no. 23.
14. Francisco de Salcedo. See ch. 23, no. 6.
15. Gaspar Daza. See ch. 23, no. 6.
16. See ch. 33, no. 12.

CHAPTER 33

1. See ch. 32, no. 15.
2. The confessor she is referring to throughout this chapter is Baltasar Alvarez, S.J.
3. The Incarnation.
4. A dark cell in the monastery for those who by law were to be thus punished.
5. In ch. 29, nos. 9 ff.
6. Pedro Ibáñez.
7. Pedro Ibáñez retired to the solitary monastery of Trianos (León), where he died February 2, 1565.
8. Dionisio Vázquez was followed in office by Gaspar de Salazar in April, 1561. Disagreements with the Bishop of Avila led to Salazar's removal early in 1562.
9. Doña Juana de Ahumada, who lived in Alba with her husband, Juan de Ovalle. See ch. 31, no. 19.
10. She is referring to the money received from her brother Lorenzo, who was living in Quito (Ecuador). See her letter thanking him, December 23, 1561.
11. See ch. 32, no. 18.
12. August 12, 1561.
13. It was a monastery of Poor Clares in the City.
14. St. Teresa received this mystical experience in the Christ chapel of the Dominican church of St. Thomas, outside the walls of

Avila, August 15, 1561.

15. In ch. 27, no. 2.
16. See no. 14.
17. See ch. 36, nos. 15 ff.

CHAPTER 34

1. Doña Luisa de la Cerda was a daughter of the second Duke of Medinaceli and, through him, descended from the royal houses of Spain and France. Her husband, Arias Pardo de Saavedra, one of the wealthiest men in Castile, died January 13, 1561.
2. December 24, 1561.
3. This Jesuit foundation was made by St. Francis Borgia in 1558. The rector was Pedro Domenech, and the minister was Gil González Dávila.
4. In no. 1.
5. García de Toledo, O.P., was a nephew of the Count of Oropesa and cousin of the Viceroy of Peru. In 1555, he was subprior at the Dominican house at Avila, St. Thomas. It was probably there that Teresa met him the first time. In 1577, he went to Peru as provincial. He returned in 1581 and died at Talavera in 1590.
6. Pedro Ibáñez, in ch. 33, no. 5.
7. Gaspar de Salazar, S.J., in ch. 33, nos. 9-10.
8. In ch. 32, no. 12; ch. 33, no. 2.
9. In ch. 13, no. 14. She is referring, perhaps, to Baltasar Alvarez, S.J. See ch. 28, nos. 14-16.
10. See 1 Th. 5:19.
11. At the time Teresa was writing this chapter, two of those who had guided her were already dead: Peter of Alcántara, October 18, 1562, and Pedro Ibáñez, O.P., February 2, 1565.
12. Gaspar de Salazar, in ch. 33, nos. 9-10.
13. Pedro Ibáñez and Domingo Báñez, especially the former.
14. In no. 15.
15. She is speaking of García de Toledo, O.P., who was not in Avila at the time.
16. Teresa is speaking about the interior life of García de Toledo for whom these pages were destined. But since they were destined for others as well, she speaks of these things in a veiled way.
17. Doña Guiomar. See ch. 30, no. 3.
18. Martín de Guzman y Barrientos, married to her half sister, María de Cepeda.
19. Castellanos de la Cañada, where Teresa went during her early

illness. See ch. 3, no. 3; ch. 4, no. 6.

CHAPTER 35

1. Doña Luisa de la Cerda, in ch. 34, nos. 1, 3.
2. A *beata* was a woman who wore a religious habit, but lived a life of recollection and virtue outside a community. María de Jesús, a young widow, after entering the Carmelite monastery in Granada, felt called to leave before making profession and to found a reformed Carmel. She founded the Carmel in Alcalá, a year after Teresa founded St. Joseph's. the life she inaugurated there was extremely rigorous, and in 1568 it was mitigated by Teresa herself.
3. The prescription of absolute poverty is not contained in the rule, but was imposed by a brief of Gregory IX, April 6, 1229. See *Rule of St. Albert*, Eds. H. Clarke, O.Carm. and B. Edwards, O.C.D. (Aylesford: Carmelite Priory, 1973), pp. 19-21.
4. Pedro Ibáñez, who at that time was living a solitary life at Trianos. See ch. 32, nos. 16-17.
5. Doña Luisa de la Cerda.
6. Besides these oral counsels, he wrote to Teresa a famous letter on poverty. See *Monumenta*, I, 17-19.
7. This was an academic title in use among Dominicans which was the equivalent of licentiate. She is speaking of Pedro Ibáñez.
8. Angel de Salazar.
9. There were more than 150 nuns according to what she later wrote in *Foundations*, ch. 2, no. 1.
10. Pedro Domenech.
11. See no. 8.
12. St. Joseph's in Avila.
13. Allusion to Mt. 19:29.
14. There is an allusion to three biblical passages here: Mk. 10:28; Ps. 94:20; Mt. 7:14.

CHAPTER 36

1. Toledo.
2. Reference to the brief *Ex parte vestra*, February 7, 1562. See *Monumenta*, I, 9-14.
3. The bishop was Don Alvaro de Mendoza, and the other gentleman, in whose house St. Peter was staying, was probably Don Juan Blázquez.
4. The bishop did not at first show any willingness to accept the

monastery, but after an interview with Teresa he changed his mind completely.

5. He died in Arenas (Avila) October 18, 1562.
 6. Don Juan de Ovalle, the husband of her sister Doña Juana de Ahumada.
 7. Doña Guiomar de Ulloa.
 8. To the Incarnation, as in fact happened.
 9. See ch. 35, no. 8.
 10. August 24, 1562. There were four: Antonia Henao (del Espíritu Santo), María de la Paz (de la Cruz); Ursula Revilla (de los Santos), and María de Avila (de San José).
 11. They were Doña Inés and Doña Ana de Tapia. Later, as Descalced, they were known as Inés de Jesús and Ana de la Encarnación.
 12. In no. 3; ch. 33, no. 11.
 13. See ch. 33, nos. 1-2.
 14. Despite this remark, historians point out that Ursula de los Santos, for example, brought three hundred ducats.
 15. Allusion to Ph. 4:13.
 16. In ch. 32, nos. 14-15; ch. 33, no. 2.
 17. The prioress of the Incarnation at that time was Doña María Cimbrón. She was elected in August, 1562, in those elections Teresa had so feared. See ch. 35, nos. 7-8.
 18. She is referring to the particular ceremony in which one in the chapter of faults publicly accuses oneself before the provincial.
 19. Domingo Báñez.
 20. Don Gonzalo de Aranda.
 21. Francisco de Salcedo. See ch. 32, no. 18.
 22. Gaspar Daza, in ch. 23, no. 6.
 23. This letter has been lost.
 24. See ch. 27, no. 19.
 25. It is not known who this person was.
 26. Pedro Ibáñez.
 27. Obviously Teresa is very careful in recording this data. But the Apostolic Constitution, *Quae Honorem Conditoris*, which contains the text of the Carmelite rule as ordained by Cardinal Hugo, was given in 1247. It is noteworthy that the Carmelite rule was composed about 1209 by St. Albert, patriarch of Jerusalem, and was approved by Honorius III, with the bull *Ut vivendi normam*, in 1226. Later, it was modified by Innocent IV in 1247 and mitigated by Eugene IV in 1432. When Teresa writes that in her
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monastery they keep the rule of our Lady of Mt. Carmel without mitigation, she is referring to their giving up the text mitigated by Eugene IV, which was observed in the monastery of the Incarnation. They substituted for this text the rule as approved by Innocent IV. This was the juridical and spiritual point of departure for her reform. See *Rule of Saint Albert*; also *Monumenta*, I, 455-459.

28. María de Jesús, in ch. 35, nos. 1 ff.
29. She is addressing García de Toledo, O.P.
30. See ch. 32, note 11.

CHAPTER 37

1. With this chapter she begins the last fragment of her *Life*. This was written, as she says, by order of God and her directors.
2. Domingo Báñez, O.P. and García de Toledo, O.P.
3. See ch. 30, nos. 8-18.
4. In ch. 30, nos. 8-18.
5. In ch. 11, nos. 15-16.

CHAPTER 38

1. Allusion to 2 Co. 12:2-4 and to *Letters of St. Jerome*, Letter 22: to Eustochium.
2. She is speaking of Doña Luisa de la Cerda. See ch. 34, no. 1. She mentions her heart trouble in ch. 4, no. 5; ch. 5, no. 7; ch. 7, no. 11.
3. This probably happened May 29, 1563. The secluded spot was one of the hermitages at the monastery of St. Joseph. "A volume by the Carthusian" refers to the *Life of Christ* written in Latin by the Carthusian, Ludolph of Saxony. The four volumes were translated into Spanish and first printed in 1502 at Alcalá. The meditation for Pentecost deals with the three stages of the spiritual life: beginners, proficients, and the perfect.
4. Pedro Ibáñez.
5. Pedro Ibáñez.
6. Gaspar de Salazar.
7. At the beginning of no. 16.
8. She wrote about the effects of the visions in ch. 28, nos. 10-13; ch. 32, no. 12; and of the differences in degree in ch. 37, no. 2.
9. In no. 23.
10. Gregorio Fernández.
11. This nun and the one mentioned in no. 29 both died at the

Incarnation.

12. That is, an intellectual vision. See ch. 27, no. 2.
13. At the College of St. Giles in Avila. She speaks of these trials in chaps. 23-25 and especially in ch. 30, particularly in no. 8.
14. The brother's name was Alonso de Henao. He died April 11, 1557.
15. She is speaking of Diego Matías, a Carmelite in Avila, who for some time had been confessor at the Incarnation.
16. In ch. 37, no. 1. She will repeat this in ch. 39, no. 20 and in ch. 40, no. 17.
17. In ch. 38, no. 13.
18. See 1 Co. 15:41.

CHAPTER 39

1. She is alluding to the imaginative visions of the humanity of the Lord, which were the more frequent. See ch. 29, no. 4; ch. 37, no. 4.
2. This was her first cousin, Pedro Mejía. He was suffering from stones.
3. Probably Gaspar de Salazar, S.J. See ch. 33, no. 7.
4. The hermitage of Christ at the Pillar in the monastery of St. Joseph in Avila was so called because of a beautiful painting of Christ done under the direction of Teresa herself, Isabel de Santo Domingo declared in her testimony for the processes of Teresa's canonization: "This painting of Christ at the Pillar, the Holy Mother had painted in the said hermitage, after spending many hours of prayer over it, and instructing a very good painter in the way it should be painted, and how he should do the cords, the wounds, the face, the hair, and especially a tattered piece on the left arm near the elbow. And this declarant knows, as she heard it from some Religious who were present, that, when the painting was finished, and the Holy Mother went to see it, she was enraptured before it, in the presence of the painter, without being able to prevent it." *Depositions of the Processes of St. Teresa of Jesus*, trans. E. Sarmiento and a Carmelite nun (Flemington, N.J.: The Carmel, 1969), pp. 229-230.
5. García de Toledo, O.P., and Domingo Báñez, O.P.
6. Doña Luisa de la Cerda, in ch. 34, nos. 1 ff.
7. The thought is left suspended here and is interrupted by a sudden digression, a characteristic of Teresa's spontaneous way of writing.

8. She could be referring to Isabel de San Pablo, who made profession at the age of seventeen; to María Bautista, María de San Jerónimo, and Isabel de Santo Domingo, who were all young and received the religious habit between 1563 and 1564.
9. She is referring to the bull of Pius IV, *Cum a Nobis petitur*, given July 17, 1565. See *Monumenta*, I, 43-47.
10. Mt. 20:12.
11. See ch. 10, no. 7. She returns here to speak of the vision she was about to relate in no. 8.
12. Teresa is humbly reticent about words the Lord speaks to her in her own favor. See ch. 38, no. 32; ch. 40, nos. 2, 17.
13. See ch. 7, no. 19; ch. 31, no. 12.
14. Allusion to oral accounts given to García de Toledo, O.P.
15. Rv. 4:6-8; Ezk. 1:5 ff.
16. In ch. 29, no. 13.
17. See ch. 37, no. 7; ch. 21, no. 9.
18. She probably read it in Osuna's *Third Spiritual Alphabet*, XVI, ch. 5.
19. In no. 20.
20. The Lord uses the words of Ps. 4:3.
21. Not a psalm but the Athanasian Creed which used to be recited at times in the Divine Office.
22. The College of St. Giles in Avila.

CHAPTER 40

1. She speaks of this vision in ch. 32, and of her lasting remembrance of it in nos. 1 and 4 of ch. 32.
2. Allusion to Mt. 5:18.
3. This whole passage (nos. 1-4) is a typical example of an ineffable mystical experience of truth as an attribute of God and as contained in Sacred Scripture.
4. This is the mystical experience that serves as the foundation for Teresa's doctrine on humility. See the *Interior Castle*, VI, ch. 10, no. 7.
5. That is, she sees Him in an imaginative vision and in glorified form. See ch. 28, nos. 1, 3; ch. 29, no. 4; ch. 37, no. 4; ch. 39, no. 1.
6. Of all the mystical graces Teresa refers to in her *Life*, this is one of the most doctrinally fruitful. It provided a basis for her book *Interior Castle* (I, ch. 1) and for one of the most beautiful chapters on *The Way of Perfection*, ch. 28, nos. 9-12. See also *Spir Test.*,

- 20, 13, 14.
7. In ch. 9, nos. 4-6. She stresses this in chaps. 28 and 29 of *The Way of Perfection*.
 8. The books she alludes to are probably Osuna's *Third Spiritual Alphabet* (XVIII, 1) and Laredo's *Ascent of Mount Sion* (III, chaps. 22 and 41). As for St. Augustine, she is referring either to the pseudo-Augustinian *Soliloquies*, ch. 31; or to the *Confessions*, X, ch. 27. See *Interior Castle* IV, ch. 3, no. 3; VI, ch. 7, no. 9; *The Way of Perfection*, ch. 28, no. 2.
 9. The absorption or suspension of all the faculties doesn't last long. See ch. 18, no. 12; ch. 20, no. 18. As for the semi-ecstatic state that follows the total absorption, see ch. 20, no. 19.
 10. She does so in no. 10.
 11. Mentioned in no. 5.
 12. Teresa delicately avoids further specification about the religious order. As a result, these lines, which today go almost unnoticed, were in the past the occasion of heated disputes during entire centuries. Gratian identifies the order as Dominican; Ribera, as Jesuit; there were other claims that it was Franciscan, Teresa's own Carmelite reform, and, finally, Augustinian. These nos. 12-15 were drawn as well into other disputes. For the whole strange story, see Tomás Álvarez (de la Cruz), "Pleito Sobre Visiones," in *Ephemerides Carmeliticae*, VIII (Rome, 1957), 3-43.
 13. The Inquisitor, Francisco de Soto y Salazar. See *Spir. Test.*, 58, note 12.
 14. See ch. 7, no. 11.
 15. In ch. 30, nos. 8 ff.
 16. In ch. 26, no. 4; ch. 38, no. 1.
 17. Monastery of St. Joseph.
 18. García de Toledo, O.P.: "lord," because of his noble lineage; "father," because of his deep interest in her soul's welfare.
 19. One of these three was for certain Domingo Báñez, O.P., the other two were probably Baltasar Álvarez, S.J., and Gaspar de Salazar, S.J.

EPILOGUE

1. García de Toledo, O.P.
2. See ch. 10, no. 8; ch. 30, no. 22; ch. 37, no. 1.
3. She refers to St. John of Avila, to whom she does in fact send the book.

Notes to the Spiritual Testimonies**TESTIMONY 1**

1. Addressed to Pedro Ibáñez, O.P. See *Life*, ch. 33, nos. 5-6.
2. Concerning this illness of St. Teresa, see *Life*, ch. 7, no. 11; ch. 40, no. 20; *Spir. Test.*, 22, no. 2.
3. See *Life*, ch. 25, no. 14.

TESTIMONY 2

1. Written for Pedro Ibáñez, O.P.
2. This improvement came while she was staying with Doña Luisa de la Cerda. See *Life*, ch. 34, nos. 3-5.

TESTIMONY 3

1. Written for García de Toledo, O.P.
2. She is referring to the foundation of St. Joseph's at Avila. See *Life*, ch. 32, nos. 14-15.
3. Ga. 2:20.
4. Domingo Báñez, O.P. A kind of epilogue to the previous testimonies, this no. 13 is preceded by the symbol IHS.
5. Mancio de Corpus Christi, O.P., a noted Dominican theologian who taught theology for sixteen years at the University of Alcalá and for eleven at that of Salamanca.

TESTIMONY 4

1. Historians have looked upon this obscure account as referring to a prophecy about St. Teresa's death. However, if twenty-one more years of her life remained, she would have died in 1590; whereas she died in 1582.

TESTIMONY 5

1. She is referring to Martín Ramírez, a merchant from Toledo, through whose charitable bequest she was able to make the foundation at Toledo. See *Foundations*, ch. 15, no. 16.

TESTIMONY 6

1. St. Teresa was doubtful about making foundations in small towns, since she would then be forced to accept endowments for their support. See *Foundations*, ch. 9, no. 2.
2. Jb. 16:1.
3. See *Foundations*, ch. 3.

TESTIMONY 7

1. See *Life*, ch. 34, no. 10.

TESTIMONY 9

1. See *Life*, ch. 20, no. 5 and note 5.

TESTIMONY 11

1. St. Teresa inaugurated her Carmel in Alba on January 25, 1571. See *Foundations*, ch. 20, no. 14. On February 2nd, she went back to Salamanca, and it was most probably there that she received this favor.

TESTIMONY 12

1. This was written for her confessor Martín Gutiérrez, S.J., who was rector of the Jesuit house in Salamanca. He helped Teresa with the foundation she made in that city. See *Foundations*, ch. 18, no. 1.
2. The Sister who sang was Isabel de Jesús (Jimena). See *Int. Castle*, VI, ch. 11, nos. 8-10.
3. See Lk. 2:35.

TESTIMONY 13

1. Jn. 14:23.
2. See *Int. Castle*, VII, ch. 1, no. 6.
3. See *Life*, ch. 23, note 7.

TESTIMONY 14

1. See *Spir. Test.*, 13.
2. June 30, 1571.

TESTIMONY 15

1. See *Life*, ch. 40, no. 21.
2. Tt. 2:5, 1 Co. 14:34.

TESTIMONY 16

1. July 10, 1571.
2. Agustín de Ahumada, who went to South America in 1544 and served the king in Peru and Chile. Later he served as governor of Tacuman (Argentina). He did not return to Spain until after Teresa's death.
3. The reference is to her reluctance to accept the appointment as

prioress of the Incarnation made by the Apostolic Visitor, Pedro Fernández, O.P. See *Foundations*, ch. 21, no. 1.

TESTIMONY 19

1. See *Foundations*, ch. 28, nos. 21-36.

TESTIMONY 20

1. Sg. 4:16.

TESTIMONY 21

1. She is speaking of a painting given her by the Countess of Osorno, Doña María de Velasco, a friend of hers who lived in Valladolid. The painting is still preserved at St. Joseph's of Avila.
2. When she took possession of her office as prioress of the Incarnation, October 14, 1571, she placed a statue of Our Lady of Clemency in the prioress's stall with the keys to the monastery in its hands.

TESTIMONY 25

1. Lk. 1:47.
2. She is probably referring to Father Martín Gutiérrez, S.J., rector of the Jesuit college in Salamanca. See *Spir. Test.*, 12, note 1.

TESTIMONY 28

1. This is a probable reference to an event reported by Yepes in his life of St. Teresa. One day in Toledo, Teresa was envying St. Mary Magdalene for the love our Lord had for her. The Lord then appeared to Teresa and said: "While I was on earth, I took her for my friend; but now that I am in heaven, I have chosen you."

TESTIMONY 29

1. See *Spir. Test.*, 13 and 14.

TESTIMONY 31

1. In May 1572, the Apostolic Visitor, Pedro Fernández, O.P., at the request of St. Teresa, sent St. John of the Cross to Avila to be confessor to the nuns at the Incarnation.

TESTIMONY 32

1. Mt. 17:1-9.

2. Lk. 2:34-35.

3. Jn. 13:16.

TESTIMONY 33

1. Ex. 14:5-31.

TESTIMONY 34

1. This incomplete testimony is almost certainly spurious. She was in Beas from February to May in 1575.

TESTIMONY 35

1. This is a rough draft concerning the vow of obedience she made to her superior and director, Father Gratian.
2. She arrived in Ecija, Andalusia, on her way to Seville.
3. See *Life*, ch. 38, no. 9.

TESTIMONY 36

1. Ps 147:14.
2. May 23, 1575, in the hermitage of St. Anne
3. See *Life*, ch. 38, no. 9; *Spir. Test.*, 64.
4. See *Letters*, to Gratian, Jan. 9, 1577

TESTIMONY 37

1. See *Spir. Test.*, 28.

TESTIMONY 38

1. Eliseus is a pseudonym St. Teresa used in referring to Father Gratian.

TESTIMONY 39

1. Sg. 54
2. According to Father Gratian, she is referring here to the feast of The Presentation of Our Lady in the Temple

TESTIMONY 40

1. See *Spir. Test.*, 14

TESTIMONY 41

1. Her brothers Lorenzo and Pedro arrived at the port of Sanlúcar upon their return from America on August 12, 1575. She is referring to her brother, Lorenzo, who brought with him his children

See *Foundations*, ch. 25, no. 3.

2. See *Constitutions* (Avila 1567), on Enclosure.

TESTIMONY 45

1. She is speaking of a monastery of Calced Carmelite nuns in Paterna and its reform by some nuns from her Carmel in Seville.

TESTIMONY 46

1. See *Int. Castle*, VI, ch. 5, no. 6.

TESTIMONY 49

1. Mt. 16:16.

TESTIMONY 51

1. 1 Co. 10:31.

TESTIMONY 53

1. Allusion to the Accusation made against her to the Inquisition of Seville by María del Corro. See *Spir. Test.*, 58, note 1.
2. Father Gratian. This letter has been lost.
3. 1 Co. 10:13.
4. Because of his duties as Apostolic Visitor, Father Gratian had to be absent from Seville most of the time.
5. In this devotional tradition, the fifth agony represented Christ in the arms of His Blessed Mother after He had been taken down from the cross.

TESTIMONY 54

1. She is referring to Father Gratian. as in *Spir. Test.*, 50.

TESTIMONY 55

1. The brief concerned the visitation of the Calced Carmelites of Andalusia.
2. Probable allusion to *Spir. Test.*, 39.

TESTIMONY 56

1. Lk. 1:47. See *Spir. Test.*, 39.

TESTIMONY 58

1. This is addressed to Rodrigo Alvarez, S.J., who became Teresa's spiritual director when she was in Seville for her foundation there.

When María del Corro was dismissed from her Carmelite community in Seville, she reported St. Teresa and her nuns to the tribunal of the Inquisition in Seville as illuminists. The Inquisition entrusted the investigation to its consultants, Rodrigo Alvarez and Enrique Enríquez, both Jesuits. According to the procedures, after presenting to Teresa the accusations made against her, they requested her answers in writing. For more details see Enrique Llamas Martínez, O.C.D., *Santa Teresa de Jesús y la Inquisición española* (Madrid: CSIC, 1972).

2. Antonio Araoz, S.J. was sent to Spain by St. Ignatius of Loyola in 1541. He met St. Teresa in Ávila.
3. St. Francis Borgia. See *Life*, ch. 24, no. 3: *Way of Perfection*, ch. 31, no. 5.
4. One of the Society's foremost administrators, Giles González Dávila, was in contact with St. Teresa for a number of years, especially while she was prioress at the Incarnation, 1571-1574.
5. Father Baltasar Alvarez, S.J., while still in his twenties, became St. Teresa's confessor and guided her from 1559 to 1564. He was at the time rector at St. Giles in Avila. See *Life*, ch. 28, nos. 14-16.
6. Gaspar de Salazar, S.J., was helpful both materially and spiritually to St. Teresa while he was rector for a short while in Avila in 1561. Disagreements with the Bishop of Avila led to his removal early in 1562. Later he was rector in Toledo and in Cuenca, where in 1575 he was removed from office for undue harshness.
7. Luis de Santander, S.J., was founder and rector of the Jesuit College at Segovia and helped St. Teresa make her foundation there in 1574.
8. Jerónimo Martínez de Ripalda, S.J., is best known as the author of a famous catechism. He was Teresa's confessor at Salamanca. It was at his command that she began to write her *Foundations*.
9. Pablo Hernández, S.J., helped St. Teresa with her foundation in Toledo in 1569.
10. Juan Ordóñez, S.J., was a spiritual advisor to St. Teresa when he was rector in Avila.
11. St. Peter of Alcántara, founder of a Franciscan reform, first met St. Teresa in Avila in 1558. See *Life*, ch. 27, nos. 16-20; ch. 30, nos. 2-7.
12. Francisco de Soto y Salazar was at first Canon of Avila, then Inquisitor at Cordoba, Seville, and Toledo. Later, from 1571 to 1578, he was Bishop of Salamanca. See *Life*, ch. 40, no. 16.
13. St. John of Avila (1500-1569) was born in Almodóvar del Cam-

po, studied at Alcalá and Salamanca, and became known as the Apostle of Andalusia because of the great amount of preaching he did in that area.

14. She is referring to *The Book of Her Life*.
15. *The Way of Perfection*.
16. Vicente Barrón, O.P. was a consultant to the Inquisition and confessor of Teresa's father. He was her confessor in her early years and again from March, 1569 to August, 1570, when she made her foundation in Toledo. See *Life*, ch. 5, note 3; ch. 7, note 8.
17. Domingo Báñez, O.P., was a professor of theology at St. Thomas College in Avila. He was Teresa's confessor from 1561 to 1567, and assisted her in her first foundation. Later, he was rector of St. Gregory's College in Valladolid from 1573 to 1577.
18. Diego de Chaves, O.P., at one time confessor to Philip II, was rector of St. Thomas in Avila, where he met St. Teresa.
19. Pedro Ibáñez, O.P., was professor of theology at St. Thomas in Avila, where he met St. Teresa. He was one of those who told her to write her *Life*, and he helped her in founding her first monastery of St. Joseph. Later, he retired to a more solitary monastery in the province of León. See *Life*, ch. 32, nos. 16-17, ch. 33, nos. 4-6.
20. García de Toledo, O.P., was a nephew of the Count of Oropesa. He went to Mexico where he joined the Dominicans in 1535. He returned to Spain in 1545. St. Teresa sent him the first redaction of her *Life*, and he ordered her to add an account of the foundation of St. Joseph (in the second redaction), all of which he corrected together with her *Way of Perfection*. See *Life*, ch. 34, nos. 6-16.
21. Bartolomé de Medina, O.P., was professor of theology at Salamanca. At one time he was very critical of St. Teresa, but later became one of her strong supporters.
22. Felipe de Meneses, O.P., was rector of St. Gregory's in Valladolid, where he met St. Teresa. He was her confessor there from 1567 to 1569.
23. Juan de Salinas, O.P., was a famous preacher and for many years provincial of his order.
24. Diego de Yanguas, O.P., was a renowned preacher and theologian. While prior in Segovia, he became St. Teresa's confessor there. In collaboration with him and Gratian, she revised her *Interior Castle*. It was he who ordered her to burn her manuscript of commentary on the *Song of Songs*; he thought it un-

suitable for a woman to write on this theme.

25. Her *Life*.

26. Reference to the Inquisition. See the introduction to her *Life*.

TESTIMONY 59

1. This testimony was also probably written for Rodrigo Alvarez, S.J. — not in his capacity as consultant to the Inquisition, but as her spiritual director.
2. She speaks of a kind that comes before this “first prayer” in no. 25 of this testimony.
3. St. Francis Borgia, S.J. See *Life*, ch. 24, no. 3.
4. In no. 19, she states that the wound of love, the prayer described in nos. 17 and 18, precedes the raptures.
5. See *Life*, ch. 18, no. 2.
6. St. John of Avila. His letter to St. Teresa was written on September 12, 1568.
7. Diego de Acosta, S.J., was at the time provincial in Andalusia.
8. See *Spir. Test.*, 21, no. 2.

TESTIMONY 60

1. For a further clarification of what she is speaking of here, see her letter to Gratian from Toledo, September 5, 1576. The confessors she refers to here are the Jeronimite, Diego de Yepes, and Dr. Alonso Velázquez, who was later consecrated a bishop. See also *Foundations*, ch. 30, no. 1; *Spir. Test.*, 65.

TESTIMONY 64

1. See *Life*, ch. 38, no. 9.

TESTIMONY 65

1. Addressed to her former confessor at Toledo, Dr. Alonso Velázquez, who at this time was bishop of Osma. In the margin he wrote: “This is a part of an account Mother Teresa sent me about her spirit and method of proceeding.” See *Spir. Test.*, 60, note 1.
2. See *Foundations*, ch. 29, no. 18.
3. See *Spir. Test.*, 58, note 17.
4. *Ibid.*, note 21.
5. *Ibid.* notes 2-10.
6. See Sg. 8:1. The allusion is to some theme or grace known to the bishop but unknown to us.

7. Jn. 14:23.

Notes to the Soliloquies

3

1. Ps. 4:3.
2. Ps. 103:15; Mt. 16:27.
3. 1 P. 1:19.

4

1. Mt. 22:11.

5

1. Mt. 7:7.
2. Lk. 10:40-42.
3. See *Confessions*, X, ch. 29.

7

1. Pr. 8:31.
2. Lk 3:22.
3. Lk. 1:46.

8

1. Jn. 6:67-68.
2. Rm 11:33; Jb. 9:10.
3. Mt. 11:28.
4. Jn 9.
5. Pr. 8:17; Mt. 7:7; 9:13.

9

1. Jn. 7:37.

10

1. Ps. 18:5.
2. Jn. 11:36.
3. Jn. 11:33.

11

1. Lk. 23:34.

14

1. Ps. 34:9.
2. Ezk. 18:21-22.

15

1. See *Interior Castle*, VI, ch. 6, no. 6.
2. Mt. 25:13.

16

1. Ws. 9:14.
2. Sg. 8:6.
3. Ps. 120:6.
4. 2 P. 1:4.
5. Rv. 19:9; 21:27.
6. Ps. 42:12.
7. Ps. 42:3; 30:13.
8. Is. 30:15.
9. Ps. 31:1.

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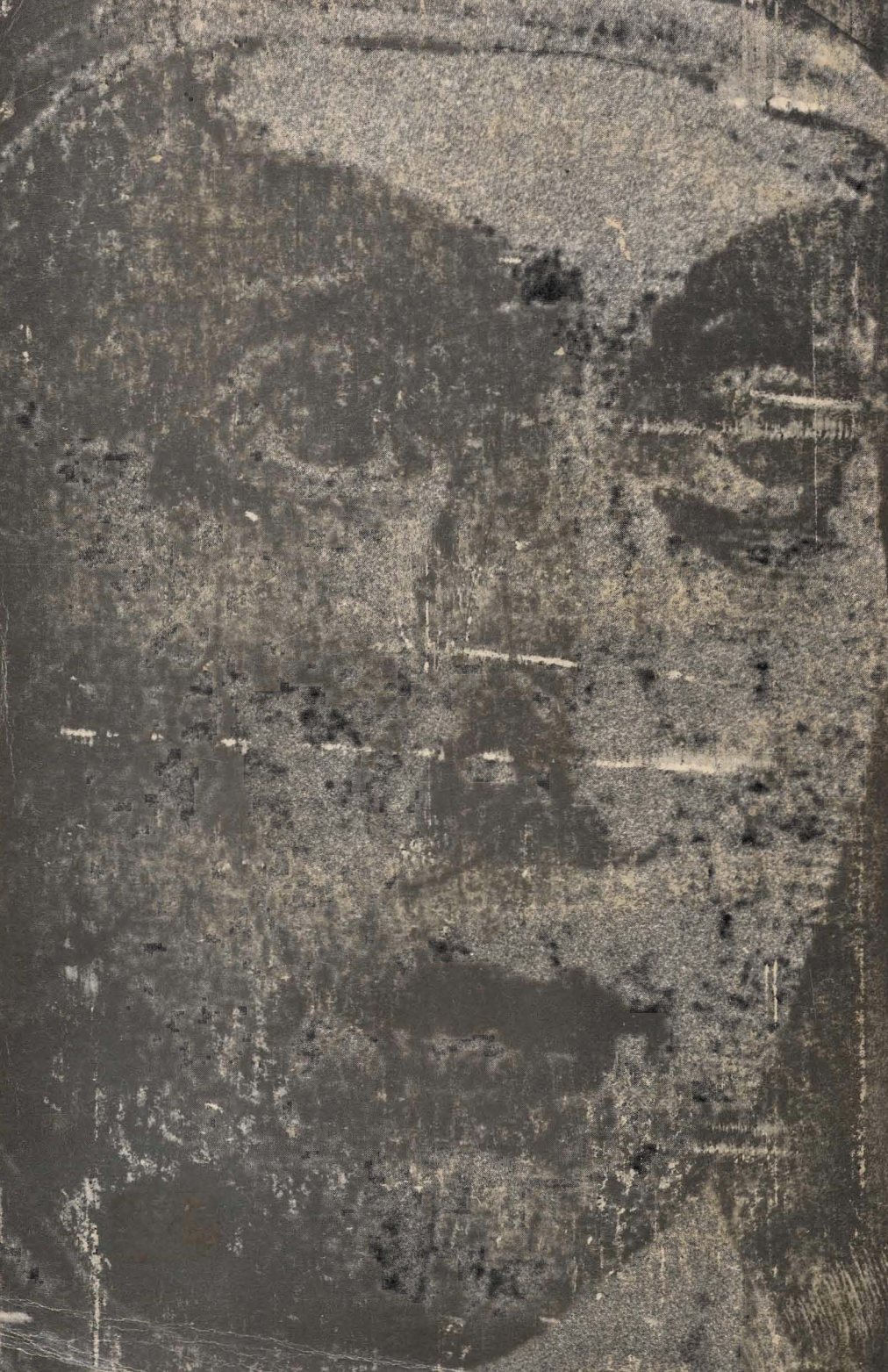
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ST. TERESA OF AVILA

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St. Teresa of Avila*

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of
St. Teresa of Avila*

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*The Way of Perfection
Meditations on the Song of Songs
The Interior Castle*

Translated by
Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D.
and
Otilio Rodriguez, O.C.D.

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The Way of Perfection

THE WAY OF PERFECTION

INTRODUCTION

Origins

IN THE LAST FIVE CHAPTERS of her *Life*, St. Teresa describes the unusual events that surrounded her first foundation of a monastery for nuns. These chapters were added in her revision of this work and were written when she was already living in the new monastery called St. Joseph's.¹ Her confessor at the time was the Dominican theologian Domingo Báñez, who was a professor of theology at St. Thomas College in Avila. It was another Dominican friar, however, García de Toledo, for whom she wrote her *Life*. Because he was anxious to have it, she sent her final version to him without taking time to read it over.² This account of her life dealing with so many personal matters and such unusual and sublime mystical experiences passed, a few months later, into the hands of Báñez. Though the work contained excellent doctrine about contemplative prayer, he nonetheless shunned the thought of allowing it to be circulated among nuns or others interested in the subject.

Having got word of this work written by their Mother Foundress, the nuns at St. Joseph's were understandably curious and eager to read it. Teresa herself did not share her confessor's misgivings and thought the book could be read profitably by those who were favored with passive prayer.³ But since Báñez refused to hear of this and even threatened to throw the manuscript into the fire, the nuns pressed Teresa to write another work just for them about prayer. The learned Dominican was more receptive to this idea, and he allowed Teresa to "write some things about prayer."⁴ The nuns

themselves, in addition to Báñez's general permission, made their own specific requests about the subject matter. Some of them were eager to learn about contemplation—and even perfect contemplation. Others, apparently frightened by the thought of such elevated topics, asked for simpler themes such as how to recite vocal prayer.⁵ In any event, Teresa wrote *The Way of Perfection* for her nuns and with their requests and needs in mind; and she therefore dialogues with them throughout the work.

In Teresa's view, her response to the Sisters' urgings was like an act of obedience; "I have decided to obey them,"⁶ she says. And when at different times she begins to sense the lack of order in the way she is proceeding, she comforts herself with the thought that she is writing for her Sisters, in obedience to them, and that they will not mind. At one point in the middle of her work, she moans in complete dissatisfaction over the jumbled way the material is being treated: "But what disorder in the way I write! Really, it's as though the work were done by one who doesn't know what she's doing. The fault is yours, Sisters, because you are the ones who ordered me to write this. Read it as best you can, for I am writing it as best I can. And if you find that it is all wrong, burn it. Time is necessary to do the work well, and I have so little as you see, for eight days must have gone by in which I haven't written anything. So I forget what I have said and also what I was going to say."⁷

When she comes to the conclusion of her work, Teresa summarizes briefly the subject matter she dealt with: "how one reaches this fount of living water, what the soul feels there, how God satisfies it,"⁸ and so on. She then implies that she has thought of this book as an introduction to her *Life* by asserting that those who have reached the fount of living water will find her *Life* very beneficial and receive much light from it.⁹

At the outset, Teresa tells of her intention to submit her work to a theologian for censorship before turning it over to any of her nuns to read. For reasons we do not know, the censor was not Báñez, the person she mentions,¹⁰ but García de Toledo. Less severe as a censor than his Dominican confrere would probably have been, García de Toledo nonetheless per-

formed his task diligently, making in all about fifty corrections. Some of them concerned trifles, but others were more extensive and amounted to cancelling entire pages. He obviously had a clear grasp of the polemics underlying a number of the topics that were discussed. Though posterity can be grateful to him for not having consigned the book to the flames, as Teresa suggested he might if it did not meet with his approval, the number of corrections did call for a cautious revision of the whole work.

Leaving the prologue almost intact, including the reference to Báñez as the possible censor, Teresa amended the problematical passages and conformed them to the censor's opinion. In addition, she elaborated on some doctrinal matters and toned down many of the more spontaneous and confidential assertions and some of the subtle irony that flowed from her pen. Her second version also manifests a decided effort to write more legibly, as though the censor might have complained of difficulty in reading the text.

Teresa probably wrote her first redaction of *The Way of Perfection* in 1566, the year after she had completed her *Life*. Although some have thought the work was composed between 1562-1564, it seems from internal evidence, such as her references to Báñez and to her *Life*, the date would more likely be 1566.¹¹

The year in which she actually composed her second version of *The Way of Perfection* is also a matter for debate. Almost unanimously, historians of the past set 1569 as the date of composition. They established their opinion on the testimony given by a young novice from the monastery of Toledo. The worth of this testimony has been recently challenged, and the date suggested is 1566.¹² Thus Teresa would have undertaken the task as soon as the censored manuscript had been returned to her. This opinion is based on her failure to allude to any new Carmels founded by her or to the missionary spirit she received from the enthusiastic Franciscan missionary Fr. Alonso Maldonado in the autumn of 1566 after his return from the Indies.

This second version of *The Way of Perfection* was censored

again by García de Toledo as well as by another censor whose identity is unknown. Neither of them made cancellations or observations that required any major change in the book this time. One passage of the second redaction Teresa herself later modified. It is in chapter 16. In answer to the question whether God might give mystical graces to imperfect souls, Teresa thinks that He would, so as to free them from their imperfections. But she categorically denies that contemplation would ever be granted to someone in mortal sin. In her altered view she simply says: "I want to say, then, that there are times when God will want to grant some great favor to persons who are in a bad state so as to draw them by this means out of the hands of the devil."¹³

The Autographs

Happily the two autographs of *The Way of Perfection* censored by García de Toledo are still conserved. The first is on display in the royal library of the Escorial; and the second is kept in the monastery of the Carmelite nuns in Valladolid, one of Teresa's own foundations. The first manuscript, referred to as "Escorial," begins with a prologue and continues without any division into chapters, although Teresa did indicate where she desired that a chapter begin. There are seventy-two chapters and the headings of these are written in the back of the book in Teresa's hand.

Since the length of some of the chapters in the Valladolid manuscript was increased, there are, in all, only forty-two chapters. Knowing now that this work would be read by others besides her Sisters at St. Joseph's, and also, as was said, in response to the remarks of the censors, Teresa suppressed some of the material. But in other areas she enlarged upon the matter being discussed and developed her ideas further; for example, this is seen in the important matter of the prayer of recollection and quiet.

The autograph of Valladolid is the work approved by the Dominican censor, and the text that was circulated in the new

Carmels. The copies made of Valladolid, however, were not always carefully done. Two of the copies, which were reviewed, corrected, and annotated by Teresa herself, are conserved to-day in the monasteries of the Carmelite nuns in Salamanca and Madrid.

Historical Context

In sixteenth-century Spain, political events were closely tied to religious ideas. What was happening in the world at large, particularly in Spain and in other parts of Europe, left its traces on Teresa's works. What was happening in the little world of the monastery of the Incarnation also left its mark on Teresa and her writings. An understanding of some of these events enlivens many of the pages of her treatises on prayer.

Reflecting on the final experiences of which Teresa writes in her *Life*, the reader is left with the notion that the Castilian Saint was living more among the Church triumphant of heaven than the Church of this earth. She beholds the glorious risen Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the saints, and the angels. In an extraordinary vision of the angels, she experiences the glory of heaven within herself, though she does not see the Divinity clearly.¹⁴ How much she was living in heaven is reflected in her following thoughts: "These revelations helped me very much, I think, in coming to know our true country and realizing that we are pilgrims here below. . . . It happens to me sometimes that those who I know live there are my companions and the ones in whom I find comfort; it seems to me that they are the ones who are truly alive and that those who live here on earth are so dead that not even the whole world, I think, affords me company, especially when I experience those impulses."¹⁵ All of this in addition to the painful longings of love that she felt caused her to surmise that she would soon die.¹⁶

The first chapter of *The Way of Perfection*, however, reveals a Teresa very much back on earth, keenly distraught over the afflicted Church. "At that time news reached me of the harm being done in France and of the havoc the Lutherans had

caused and how much this miserable sect was growing. The news distressed me greatly, and, as though I could do something or were something, I cried to the Lord and begged Him that I might remedy so much evil.”¹⁷ What had occurred is that some harsh rumors had reached Teresa, but her remarks show that her knowledge of the facts was vague. It must be remembered that her references to the Lutherans in France represent her hazy way of speaking of Protestantism and demonstrate neither historical nor geographical precision. The unhappy news that had spread even to the enclosure of St. Joseph’s concerned the religious war between the Catholics and the Huguenots. Teresa’s stereotyped remarks reflect the way the ordinary people in Spain probably commented on the news. “Churches were being destroyed, the Blessed Sacrament taken away, many priests were being lost.”¹⁸

In Teresa’s mind the Church and Christianity were identical. The attack of “those Lutherans” was an attack against Christianity, she thought. Nowhere in this work does she use the qualifier “Catholic” to designate the members of the Church or the Church itself. Moreover the relationship between her mystical life and the Church, both in its ministry and its sufferings, was inseparable.

Curiously enough, despite all her locutions, visions, and communications from God, Teresa never received revelations destined for the Church as did other saints, such as Bridget of Sweden, Catherine of Siena, and Margaret Mary Alacoque. Her mystical life, rather, consisted of an inner experience of the content of Revelation. While it issued from within the faith, it also brought what was contained in that faith into sharper focus resulting for her in a convinced and powerful awareness of faith’s mysteries. Understandably a love of the faith accompanied her experiences and, in addition, moved her to look to the Church and Scripture for guidance. In this respect she writes: “And with this love of the faith, which God then infuses and which is strong living faith, it always strives to proceed in conformity with what the Church holds, asking of this one and that, as one who has already made a firm assent to these truths.”¹⁹ And further on she adds: “For from what I see

and know through experience, a locution bears the credentials of being from God if it is in conformity with Sacred Scripture."²⁰ In her mind, the faith was what the Church holds, the truths of Sacred Scripture.

Consequently, in consulting learned men and giving them an account of her spiritual life, Teresa was most of all concerned with whether or not her life and experiences were in agreement with the truths of the Sacred Scriptures. In a general manifestation of her soul, written in 1563 for García de Toledo, she explains with reference to Domingo Báñez: "He was a very spiritual man and a theologian with whom I discussed everything about my soul. And he discussed these matters with other learned men, among whom was Father Mancio. They found that none of my experiences was lacking in conformity with Sacred Scripture. This puts me very much at peace now, although I understand that as long as God leads me by this path I must not trust myself in anything. So I have always consulted others, even though I find it difficult."²¹ The learned man, the theologian, is envisioned by Teresa as the spokesman for "what the Church holds," a master in "the truths of Sacred Scripture."

Not for the mere sake of fulfilling a formality, then, did Teresa submit her writings. Thus, at the beginning and end of *The Way of Perfection*, she mentions Fr. Báñez as the one who she thinks will take on the task of being her censor; and on two occasions in the course of her work she states her adherence to the faith professed by the Church.²² An interesting aside is that only later, sometime around 1578, when reviewing her text in preparation for its publication, she added the qualifier "Roman." The attestation of faith at the beginning was also inserted at this time. Similar changes were introduced into the *Interior Castle* and the *Book of Foundations*. These factors, it would seem, point to little more than her eagerness for orthodoxy. In her simple view, she finds in "Holy Mother Church," the truths of Revelation, the sacraments, and a family of Christians.

"Don't allow any more harm to come to Christianity, Lord."²³ It was easy to speak of the Church as Christianity; just

as easily did Teresa feel that what was done against the Church was done against Christ, "who is so roughly treated."²⁴ What might Teresa do to prevent this harm, these "great evils"? She has no use for any recourse to violence. "Human forces are not sufficient to stop the spread of this fire caused by these heretics, even though people have tried to see if with the force of arms they could remedy all the evil that is making such progress. It has seemed to me that what is necessary is a different approach. . . . For as I have said, it is the ecclesiastical, not the secular, arm that will save us."²⁵ Now the "ecclesiastical arm" consisted of preachers and theologians; and on the plane of knowledge, they were the ones who must through their learning and words defend the Church. This excluded Teresa. "I realized I was a woman and wretched and incapable of doing any of the useful things I desired to do in the service of the Lord."²⁶ The result of these reflections, though, was not a surrender to apathy but the resolve "to do the little that was in my power."²⁷

This "little" developed into the Teresian ideal: a small group of Christians (in the beginning only eleven or twelve, later increased to fifteen and then to twenty-one), who would be good friends of the Lord by striving to follow the evangelical counsels as closely as possible and living a life of prayer for preachers and theologians, the defenders of the Church; thus a life in service of the Church, in service of Christ.

But a group of women dedicating themselves to a life of prayer and contemplation in that age and in those circumstances was destined to be looked upon, if not with complete distrust, then at least with caution.²⁸ The Spanish people in general were officially taught to follow the "level" and "safe" paths of both the ascetical life and vocal prayer and to shun the extraordinary ways of mysticism, especially its accessory phenomena of locutions, visions, and revelations.

In the case of women, the teaching was put forward with greater urgency. And the examples of false women mystics became material for small talk and subtle threat. Moreover, there were the interpretations of genetic laws which claimed that women were a mistake of nature, a kind of unfinished

man. The shocking extent to which antifeminism could reach is evident in a passage from a writing by Francisco de Osuna: "Since you see your wife going about visiting many churches, practicing many devotions, and pretending to be a saint, lock the door; and if that isn't sufficient, break her leg if she is young, for she can go to heaven lame from her own house without going around in search of these suspect forms of holiness. It is enough for a woman to hear a sermon and then put it into practice. If she desires more, let a book be read to her while she spins, seated at her husband's side."²⁹ More than mere jest was involved in a saying of the time that a woman should be allowed to leave the house on only three occasions: once for her baptism, another in order to go to the house of the man she marries, and a third for her burial.

The scholastic theologians themselves were influenced by Aristotle's reasoning that women were guided by their passions rather than by stable judgments. In the processes for Teresa's canonization, Báñez acknowledged his unwillingness to let the writings of women be circulated.³⁰ And in his official judgment of Teresa's *Life*, he praises her virtues but warns against the many revelations and visions "which are always to be greatly feared, especially in women, who are more inclined to believe that these are from God and to make sanctity consist of them."³¹

The deleterious effects these attitudes may have had on women can be imagined; and as a woman Teresa indeed did feel incapable of much. Nonetheless, her defense of women was so clear and forceful in her first writing of *The Way of Perfection* that the censor intervened, and she felt obliged to omit a large portion in her revision. After pointing out that the Lord found as much love in women as in men, and more faith, while He was on this earth and that the world has so intimidated women that they do not dare do anything worthwhile in public for Him or "dare speak some truths that we lament over in secret," she concludes sharply: "Since the world's judges are sons of Adam and all of them men, there is no virtue in women that they do not hold suspect. Yes, indeed, the day will come, my King, when everyone will be known for what he

is. I do not speak for myself, because the world already knows my wickedness—and I have rejoiced that this wickedness is known publicly—but because I see that these are times in which it would be wrong to undervalue virtuous and strong souls, even though they are women.”³²

Teresa's small group of women were to become good friends of the Lord, developing this friendship through a life of unceasing prayer as the Carmelite rule prescribed. But over and above their being women, the notion that they were to practice mental prayer also created problems. For both the followers of Erasmus and the *Alumbrados* went to such extremes in urging the practice of mental prayer that they manifested a certain contempt for vocal prayer, including liturgical prayer and other ceremonies and rituals. Whether or not such contempt was indeed a part of the teaching of many of the groups classified as *Alumbrados* is a matter for further research. Archbishop Carranza intimates the possibility of false accusations when he speaks of a person who was accused of being an *Alumbrado* merely for praying before a crucifix.³³ In his defense of mental prayer, Carranza holds that such prayer is more excellent than vocal prayer, but he does not condemn the latter.

Nonetheless, conservative theologians feared that in the practice of mental prayer lay the seeds of Protestantism, which was as dreaded as the plague by both the civil and the ecclesiastical rulers of Spain in the golden age. The Dominican friar Melchior Cano, a theologian at the Council of Trent and consultant to Philip II and to the Inquisition, attacked his fellow Dominican, Archbishop Carranza, and Luis de Granada for promoting the practice of mental prayer among the common people. Fernando Valdés, the Inquisitor General, complained that Luis de Granada was trying to write things about contemplation for mere carpenter's wives.³⁴ It was Valdés who published in 1559 an Index of forbidden books which included almost all those dealing with prayer.³⁵ The ordinary people were to be busy maintaining their households. For such people, Mass and vocal prayer were sufficient. Another theologian in this camp, Domingo Soto, confessed that he did not understand how those who were on their knees

before the tabernacle for two hours could be thinking of God since God is invisible.³⁶ And Mancio de Corpus Christi, another theologian at Trent, criticized Carranza for speaking of prayer as though it were a sharing between friends.

This was the skeptical environment in which Teresa founded a monastery of women who would dedicate themselves to a life of prayer, of intimate friendship with God, of living faith and love, the most perfect exemplar of which was, for her, the Blessed Mother, a carpenter's wife. All this mistrust of women is clearly enough implied in Teresa's words: "You will hear some persons frequently making objections: there are dangers; so-and-so went astray by such means; this other one was deceived; another who prayed a great deal fell away; it's harmful to virtue; it's not for women, for they will be susceptible to illusions; it's better they stick to their sewing; they don't need these delicacies; the Our Father and the Hail Mary are sufficient."³⁷

With the last statement, however, Teresa was in full agreement. If the Our Father is to be prayed in an authentic manner, it must be joined by mental prayer. Almost as if she were a mother scolding her child, she points accusingly to the senselessness of what was being urged. "Well, what is this, Christians, that you say mental prayer isn't necessary? Do you understand yourselves? Indeed, I don't think you do, and so you desire that we all be misled. You don't know what mental prayer is, or how vocal prayer should be recited, or what contemplation is, for if you did you wouldn't on the one hand condemn what on the other hand you praise."³⁸ Teresa, here, offers a strong defense of mental prayer, but she exalts vocal prayer joining it to mental prayer and observing that it may lead one into perfect contemplation.

While insisting that if there is any danger that danger lies in the neglect of mental prayer, she exclaims with enthusiasm: "Hold fast, daughters, for they cannot take from you the Our Father and the Hail Mary."³⁹ Here the censor, quick to catch the point, intervened and, going a step further from his usual method of simply crossing out a passage, wrote in the margin: "It seems she is reprimanding the Inquisitors for prohibiting books on prayer."⁴⁰

That prayer is a work of the Church and particularly efficacious in the case of God's close friends, Teresa is convinced, even though it may be women's prayer. "I trust, my Lord, in these your servants who live here, and I know they desire and strive for nothing else than to please You. For You they renounced the little they had—and would have wanted to have more so as to serve You with it. Since You, my Creator, are not ungrateful, I think You will not fail to do what they beg of You. Nor did You, Lord, when You walked in the world despise women; rather, You always, with great compassion, helped them."⁴¹ The petitions of these souls closely united to Christ, she further observes, are in conformity with Him and His Spirit and are granted through His own merits.⁴²

This community of women that had come together to live a life of prayer could find support also in the spirit of the Carmelite rule. The hermits of the past who had spent their days in rugged solitude and contemplation on Mount Carmel were to be the group's inspiration.⁴³ Despite the fact that Teresa did not seem to know about the earlier Carmelite rule written for hermits and approved by Honorius III in 1226, there was for her enough of the eremitical spirit in the rule for Carmelite mendicants approved in 1247 by Innocent IV to lead her to emphasize the practice of solitude through an enclosure and withdrawal from the world greater than that which existed at the Incarnation.⁴⁴ Because of the large numbers living in the Incarnation and the penury of the community, the nuns were obliged to spend more time in the company of benefactors both in the monastery and outside in private homes. For similar reasons, in times of sickness they often had to leave their monastery and seek assistance outside. There were other motives as well for which they could easily enough obtain permission to leave the enclosure. Some nuns at the Incarnation desired a stricter observance of enclosure so as to comply with the mandate of the Council of Trent in this regard. But Teresa's appeal was to the eremitical spirit: "For the style of life we aim to follow is not just that of nuns but of hermits."⁴⁵ Solitude was important for her small community dedicated to prayer. Thus work in a common room was to be avoided;

“silence is better observed when each nun is by herself; and to get used to solitude is a great help for prayer.”⁴⁶

Though there is much evidence to attest to the fact that the community of the Incarnation was a devout and fervent one, there did exist a class structure with its varying lifestyles according to whether one was of wealthy or poor background. Individuals were able to obtain permission to keep money, from whatever source they may have received it, and some were even allowed to have an income. Thus we find references to the custom of buying and selling rooms, the better rooms, of course, going to the richer nuns. And the nuns who were poor didn’t have rooms at all but slept in dormitories. The difference between the rich and the poor was indicated also in the religious garb by means of such things as pleats, colors, buckles, and so on. Some wore rings, and others owned pet dogs. There were those who, like Teresa, kept the title *doña* and had ample private quarters where members of their families could visit or stay. Some had servants or slaves. There were those who in virtue of their family rank took the first places in the choir. It might be added as well that in those times it was not unusual for many to enter a monastery as the solution to a social problem rather than in response to a religious vocation.⁴⁷

Upon all these practices and ways of looking at religious life, Teresa turned her back. The poverty of spirit of the gospels, like a powerful magnet, drew her. “But the one who is from nobler lineage should be the one to speak least about her father. All the Sisters must be equal.”⁴⁸ Poverty was to be the insignia of Teresa’s nuns: “in houses, clothing, words, and most of all in thought.”⁴⁹ And closely linked with detachment from money is detachment from honor because “honor and money always go together; anyone who wants honor doesn’t despise money, and anyone who despises money doesn’t care much about honor.”⁵⁰ This life of equality and humility was meant, as Teresa envisioned it, to blossom into a life of authentic sisterly love, the love Christ insisted upon for His followers. As she puts it, “in this house where there are no more than thirteen—nor must there be any more—all must be

friends, all must be loved, all must be held dear, all must be helped.”⁵¹

The Central Theme

When Teresa revised *The Way of Perfection* after Fr. García de Toledo had examined the work, she wrote somewhat formally on the opening page: “This book deals with the advice and counsel Teresa of Jesus gives to her religious Sisters and daughters.” Only later was a title given to this book of “advice and counsel,” and the title was not composed by Teresa. However she knew of it and approved. The title appears in her manuscript on the opposite side of the opening page: “The book called *The Way of Perfection* written by Teresa of Jesus, a nun of the Order of our Lady of Mount Carmel.” *The Way of Perfection* is therefore a practical book of advice and counsel destined to initiate the Carmelite nun into the life of prayer. Thus, Teresa is a teacher throughout the work, demonstrating how, pointing to the pitfalls, and explaining the right way from the wrong.

The Foundation of Prayer

In beginning her work, she first established the reasons behind this new manner of contemplative life. Because of her keen desire that the Lord’s friends be good ones, she wanted the little community to follow Christ’s counsels as perfectly as possible.⁵² This implies careful observance of the rule, and for Teresa the essential element of the Carmelite rule is unceasing prayer.⁵³ Peace is necessary for a life of prayer. Thus Teresa avoids placing burdens on her nuns. She dwells mainly on only three practices because these will help them to possess both inwardly and outwardly the peace the Lord recommends to them and will dispose them to a life of prayer.⁵⁴ What are these three practices? Love of neighbor, detachment, and humility. Together they form a foundation for prayer. Since they touch

upon the ties that are felt in one's relationship to others, to the world, and to oneself, they free the spirit.

Though admittedly there is an underlying structure and a logic in her works, Teresa makes little effort to present her ideas according to a well-ordered plan. In her characteristically simple manner, she confesses at the outset: "Since I don't know what I am about to say, I cannot say it in an orderly way."⁵⁵ It is not only in the first part of her work that she speaks of these practices that serve as a foundation for prayer, but the subjects of charity, detachment, and humility provide material for discussion again later as effects of prayer. Her digressions, too, for which she is well known, may cause readers some frustration in their efforts to follow her thought; hardly does she begin her work when she goes off into a lengthy digression (the entire second chapter) that would fit better elsewhere. Consequently, subjects treated in one section of the book will frequently be complemented by what is said on the matter in other places.

Taking up the first practice, love of neighbor, Teresa devotes four chapters to an analysis of love. Dividing love into that which is purely spiritual and that which is mixed with sensuality, she met with particular difficulty in explaining the latter. After rewriting the entire part in her revision, she then tore out the page and tried a third time.⁵⁶

With regard to the whole subject of love, she complains that the term "love" is applied to much that has nothing to do with true and perfect love. She acknowledges the importance of friendships and of how they must grow into this perfect love and are enriched by it; but for her nuns living close together and only few in number she encourages them all to be friends. Furthermore, with her great capacity for friendship, Teresa observed that too much restraint could frighten people away from the service of God. "Our nature is such that this constraint is frightening and oppressive to others, and they flee from following the road that you are taking, even though they know clearly it is the more virtuous path."⁵⁷ Her own spontaneity and freedom from excessive constraint are noticeable in many passages of her first redaction that were censored or

omitted in her revision. For example, in warning her nuns against magnificent buildings, she concluded: "And if I can say this in good conscience, may such a building fall to the ground the day you construct one." But the words used in her first writing are much stronger: "... may such a building fall to the ground and kill you all the day you desire one."⁵⁸

However sublime the spirituality of which she speaks, Teresa would never want her daughters or any of her readers to lose the compassion that goes with charity. "For at times it happens that some trifle will cause as much suffering to one as a great trial will to another; little things can bring much distress to persons who have sensitive natures. If you are not like them, do not fail to be compassionate."⁵⁹

The subject of detachment includes all that Teresa has to say through such expressions as poverty of spirit, mortification, and surrender to the will of God. What she observed in the human condition that most influenced her thinking about detachment was "how quickly all things come to an end."⁶⁰ Nor is the practice of detachment exclusively for nuns, no more than is that of charity or humility. Though Teresa wrote *The Way of Perfection* for her nuns, and it is, in a sense, a commentary on the constitutions she drafted for them, the treatise has become a popular book of spirituality since much of her advice is applicable to whoever is reading it. Remarkably, Teresa avoids any claim that nuns have a greater occasion for the practice of detachment or that their life is harder; rather, at times, she observes that married people are forced to practice greater self-discipline because of their obligations and that people living in the world have difficult trials from which the nuns are freed.⁶¹ She states: "I do not call 'giving up everything' entering religious life, and the perfect soul can be detached and humble anywhere."⁶²

The happy result of detachment is inner freedom, freedom from worry about bodily comfort, honor, and wealth. Considering the times in which she lived, the role Teresa gives to spartan fasts and penances is a small one. "But I am speaking about persons who by temperament like to be esteemed and honored and who look at the faults of others and never at their

own, and other similar things that truly arise from lack of humility.”⁶³

Detachment and humility: so closely joined that Teresa could not speak of the one without the other; these two virtues “it seems always go together.”⁶⁴ For humility implies detachment from oneself, from worry about esteem and honor. Then, just as the Virgin by humility drew the King of heaven to earth, so the soul by humility draws Love into itself. “I cannot understand how there could be humility without love or love without humility; nor are these two virtues possible without detachment from all creatures.”⁶⁵

There is that lack of self-esteem which has nothing to do with humility and is discernible through the agitation it causes. “Humility does not disturb or disquiet,” Teresa writes, “however great it may be; it comes with peace, delight, and calm. . . . The pain of genuine humility doesn’t agitate or afflict the soul; rather, this humility expands it and enables it to serve God more.”⁶⁶

In humility one is touched with the conviction that every good thing comes from God. If she felt great detachment from all things one day, Teresa knew through experience that on another such detachment could be taken from her; and she therefore concludes: “Now since this is true, who will be able to say of himself that he is virtuous or rich? For at the very moment when there is need of virtue one finds oneself poor.”⁶⁷

A Method of Prayer

A question often proposed is whether Teresa had a method of prayer which she taught. A popular method of prayer in her day was that of discursive meditation. And in turning her attention to the subject of prayer in the second part of her work in which she writes a commentary on the Our Father, she begins by referring to the many books of meditations. One of the most famous was the Dominican friar Luis de Granada’s *Book of Prayer and Meditation*, published in 1554, a work she recommends in her constitutions. While praising these books,

Teresa adds a significant qualification: "There are so many good books written by able persons for those who have methodical minds and for souls that are experienced and can concentrate within themselves that it would be a mistake if you pay attention to what I say about prayer."⁶⁸ She, indeed, does not intend to write for those who possess these qualities. Her method is for those whose minds, similar to hers, are like "wild horses."⁶⁹ "I pity these souls greatly, for they seem to be like very thirsty persons who see water in the distance, but when they want to go there, they meet someone who prevents their passing from the beginning through the middle to the end."⁷⁰

To these persons and to all others who cannot follow the path of discursive meditation, Teresa offers her method. In doing so, she turns to the Our Father, the prayer Christ taught us; for vocal prayer does not impede contemplation. But the recitation of this prayer must be informed by Teresa's method, which she calls the prayer of recollection. She calls it "recollection" because "the soul collects its faculties together and enters within itself to be with its God."⁷¹ What is necessary along with this centering of attention is the realization that God is very close. She insists on the nearness of God to each one. "All the harm comes from not truly understanding that He is near."⁷² Not only is He near, but He "never takes His eyes off you." And she asks: "Who can keep you from turning the eyes of your soul toward this Lord?"⁷³

Her method is one of presence, of being fully present to God in our prayer, for He is fully present to us at all times. "What I'm trying to point out is that we should see and be present to the One with whom we speak without turning our back on Him."⁷⁴ Centering the attention within, being fully present, looking at, gazing upon; these are the expressions that fit her method. "I'm not asking you now that you think about Him or that you draw out a lot of concepts or make long and subtle reflections with your intellect. I'm not asking you to do anything more than look at Him."⁷⁵

It is sufficient that one make the effort, and for that reason Teresa calls this prayer of recollection a method.⁷⁶ Understandably, the degrees of this recollection may vary, and

Teresa predicts that in the beginning it may be a little difficult, but soon “the gain will be clearly seen.”⁷⁷

This prayer of recollection, accompanied by vocal prayer, proved to be an excellent method, Teresa discovered, of disposing one for contemplative prayer. “And its divine Master comes more quickly to teach it and give it the prayer of quiet than He would through any other method it might use.”⁷⁸ She claims she “never knew what it was to pray with satisfaction until the Lord taught me this method.”⁷⁹ And concludes: “Therefore, Sisters, out of love for the Lord, get used to praying the Our Father with this recollection, and you will see the benefit before long. This is a manner of praying that the soul gets so quickly used to that it doesn’t go astray, nor do the faculties become restless, as time will tell.”⁸⁰

Strict adherence to any one formula never became a part of Teresa’s teaching. Her own spontaneity in prayer is displayed on almost every page and includes petitions, praise, adoration, offering, thanksgiving—all the forms of prayer. The opening words of the Our Father lead her into flights of her own unpremeditated prayer, and she teaches us to pray by praying herself. But the Our Father is always there to return to. In addition to this freedom from restriction, she values variety in the mode of being present to Christ: in joy, to be with Him as risen; in trial and sadness, to be with Him in His Passion. Presence to Christ within as He is shown to us in the different gospel accounts can be a further important aid, then, to the practice of recollection and of centering one’s attention on Him. Although risen, He still influences us through His earthly mysteries by which He draws close to us in a more tangible way.⁸¹

At times during this prayer, the soul will feel a passive quieting and be drawn gradually to a greater silence. “I know there are many persons who while praying vocally, as has been already mentioned, are raised by God to sublime contemplation.”⁸² From this method of recollection, then, Teresa goes on to describe the prayer of quiet, the initial stage of contemplation which, in her terminology, is always passive prayer and unattainable through any human efforts. This initial stage of contemplation, in which there is not yet a complete silencing of

the faculties, is followed by the prayer of union in which all the faculties come to rest in the inner silence. As contemplation begins, the recollection takes deeper hold; the words become fewer, one word uttered from time to time being sufficient. But one's own efforts are of no avail in either producing or holding on to mystical prayer. "The best way to hold on to this favor is to understand clearly that we can neither bring it about nor remove it; we can only receive it with gratitude, as most unworthy of it; and this not with many words."⁸³ Contemplation is like living water drunk from the fount; yet it is different from earthly water in that, while satisfying the soul's thirst, at the same time it increases that thirst.

The Lord gave the Our Father in a rather obscure form, Teresa thinks, so that each one may petition according to his own intention. As for herself, she came to the knowledge of many deep secrets unfolded before her by the Master who teaches those who say this prayer. "Certainly, it never entered my mind that this prayer contained so many deep secrets; for now you have seen the entire spiritual way contained in it, from the beginning stages until God engulfs the soul and gives it to drink abundantly from the fount of living water, which He said was to be found at the end of the way."⁸⁴

The end of the way cannot be reached without Teresa's indomitable determination a *muy determinada determinacion*. "They must have a great and very resolute determination to persevere until reaching the end, come what may, happen what may, whatever work is involved, whatever criticism arises, whether they arrive or whether they die on the road, or even if they don't have courage for the trials that are met, or if the whole world collapses."⁸⁵

Our Translation

Because of the demand and the lack of copies, Teresa thought, after a time, of having her book printed; but she felt the need of help for some careful editing. The unknown editor she commissioned entered unscrupulously into the delicate

task. His polished text no longer bore many of the fascinating Teresian traits. She dutifully reviewed it, patiently cancelling and rewriting some of his excessive changes; and this manuscript is now conserved in the monastery of the Carmelite nuns in Toledo. It was a copy of this text that served for the first editions of *The Way of Perfection* that appeared in Evora, 1583, in Salamanca, 1585, and in Valencia, 1587. But since those acquainted with Teresa's unlabored, conversational style were unhappy with it, Fray Luis de León in his edition of Teresa's complete works chose the autograph of Valladolid as the text. The different versions of the book, however, left the matter very confused, even into our own century, until Fr. Silverio brought clarity to the entire question in his critical editions.

Our translation is of the Valladolid autograph, the work revised by Teresa and for which she received approval from Fr. García de Toledo. A translation only of the Valladolid text, however, would bring with it certain disadvantages. The lively passages and interesting variations in the Escorial text would be lost to the English-speaking reader. Many of these omissions and variations from Escorial can be inserted into the Valladolid text without seriously damaging the flow of thought. We have indicated whatever is taken from Escorial and introduced into our main text from Valladolid by enclosing it in brackets. Where there are two versions of the same passage, yet with significant differences, we give a translation of the Escorial version in a note.

The Way of Perfection may be divided as follows:

- I. Purpose of the Teresian Carmel (chs. 1-3)
- II. Foundations of prayer: love of neighbor, detachment, and humility (chs. 4-15)
- III. Diversity of paths in contemplative communities (chs. 16-18)
- IV. Prayer in general (chs. 19-26)
- V. Commentary on the Our Father (chs. 27-42)
 - A. Christ as Master and Guide in prayer (chs. 26-27)
 - B. prayer of recollection (chs. 28-29)

- C. prayer of quiet (chs. 30-31)
- D. abandonment to the will of God (ch. 32)
- E. the Eucharist (chs. 33-35)
- F. pardon of offenses and detachment from honor and esteem (chs. 36-37)
- G. deliverance from deception and illusions (chs. 38-41)
- H. desires for eternal life (ch. 42)

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K. K.

THE WAY OF PERFECTION

The book called *The Way of Perfection* written by Teresa of Jesus, a nun of the Order of our Lady of Mount Carmel. This book is intended for the discalced nuns who observe the primitive rule of our Lady of Mount Carmel.

JHS

This book deals with the advice and counsel Teresa of Jesus gives to her religious Sisters and daughters who live in the monasteries that, with the help of our Lord and the glorious Virgin Mother of God, our Lady, she founded. These monasteries follow the primitive rule of our Lady of Mount Carmel. She directs her counsel particularly to the Sisters at St. Joseph's monastery in Avila, which was the first foundation and the place where she was prioress when she wrote this book.¹

In all that I say in this book I submit to what our Mother the Holy Roman Church holds.² If there should be anything contrary to that, it will be due to my not understanding the matter. And so I beg the learned men who will see this work to look it over carefully and to correct any mistake there may be as to what the Church holds, as well as any other mistakes in other matters. If there should be anything good in this work, may it be for the honor and glory of God and the service of His most Blessed Mother, our Lady and Patroness, whose habit I wear despite my being very unworthy to do so.

JHS

Prologue

1. The Sisters in this monastery of St. Joseph have known that I received permission from the Father *Presentado*,¹ Friar Domingo Báñez, of the order of the glorious St. Dominic, who at present is my confessor,² to write some things about prayer. It seems I might be able to meet with success in doing this because I have discussed prayer with many spiritual and holy persons. The Sisters have urged me so persistently to tell them something about it that I have decided to obey them. I am aware that the great love they have for me will make what I say, so imperfectly and with such poor style, more acceptable than what is in some books that are very well written by those who know what they are writing about. And I trust in the Sisters' prayers that possibly through them the Lord will be pleased that I manage to say something about the mode and manner of life proper to this house. And if I should be mistaken, the Father *Presentado*, who will be the first to see this book, will either make corrections or burn it. I will not have lost anything by obeying these servants of God, and they will see what I have when left to myself and when His Majesty doesn't help me.

2. I am thinking of listing some remedies for certain common, small temptations of the devil, for since they are so common perhaps little attention is paid to them. And I shall write of other things as the Lord inspires me or that might come to my mind; for since I don't know what I'm going to say, I cannot say it in an orderly way. I believe this lack of order is best since writing this book is a thing already so out of order for me. May the Lord have a hand in all that I do so that it may conform to His holy will; these are my desires always, even though my works are as faulty as I am.

3. I know there is no lack of love in me and of the desire to help as much as I can that the souls of my Sisters may advance in the service of the Lord. This love together with my age and the experience I have from living in some monasteries may help me in speaking of ordinary things to be more successful than learned men. Since these learned men have other more important occupations and are strong, they don't pay so much attention to things that don't seem to amount to much in themselves. But everything can be harmful to those as weak as we women are. The wiles of the devil are many for women who live a very cloistered life, for the devil sees that new weapons are needed in order to do harm. I, as wretched as I am, have known how to defend myself only poorly. So I have desired that my Sisters might take warning from my own experience. I shall say nothing about what I have not experienced myself or seen in others [or received understanding of from our Lord in prayer.]

4. Not long ago I was ordered to write a certain account of my life, in which I also dealt with some things about prayer.³ It could be that my confessor would not want you to see this account, and so I shall put down here something of what was said there. I shall also write of other things that to me seem necessary. May the Lord's own hand be in this work, as I have begged Him; and may He direct the work to His glory, amen.

Chapter 1

The reason I founded this monastery with such strict observance.

WHEN I BEGAN to take the first steps toward founding this monastery (for the reasons given in the book I mentioned that I wrote and also because of some great favors from the Lord through which I learned that He would be greatly served in this house), it was not my intention that there be so much external austerity or that the house have no income; on the contrary, I would have desired the possibility that nothing be lacking. In sum, my intention was the intention of the weak and wretched person that I am — although I did have some good motives besides those involving my own comfort.

2. At that time news reached me of the harm being done in France and of the havoc the Lutherans had caused and how much this miserable sect was growing. The news distressed me greatly, and, as though I could do something or were something, I cried to the Lord and begged Him that I might remedy so much evil. It seemed to me that I would have given a thousand lives to save one soul out of the many that were being lost there. I realized I was a woman and wretched and incapable of doing any of the useful things I desired to do in the service of the Lord. All my longing was and still is that since He has so many enemies and so few friends that these few friends be good ones. As a result I resolved to do the little that was in my power; that is, to follow the evangelical counsels as perfectly as I could and strive that these few persons who live here do the same. I did this trusting in the great goodness of God, who never fails to help anyone who is determined to give up everything for Him. My trust was that if these Sisters matched the ideal my desires had set for them, my faults would not have

much strength in the midst of so many virtues; and I could thereby please the Lord in some way. Since we would all be occupied in prayer for those who are the defenders of the Church and for preachers and for learned men who protect her from attack, we could help as much as possible this Lord of mine who is so roughly treated by those for whom He has done so much good; it seems these traitors would want Him to be crucified again and that He have no place to lay His head.

3. O my Redeemer, my heart cannot bear these thoughts without becoming terribly grieved. What is the matter with Christians nowadays? Must it always be those who owe You the most who afflict You? Those for whom You performed the greatest works, those You have chosen for Your friends, with whom You walk and commune by means of Your sacraments? Aren't they satisfied with the torments You have suffered for them?

4. Indeed, my Lord, one who withdraws from the world nowadays is not doing anything. Since the world so little appreciates You, what do we expect? Do we perhaps deserve to be treated better? Have we perhaps done better toward those in the world that they would keep us in their friendship? What is this? What do we now expect, those of us who through the goodness of the Lord are freed of that contagious, scabby sore, that sect whose followers already belong to the devil? Indeed, they have won punishment with their own hands and have easily earned eternal fire with their pleasures. That's their worry! Still, my heart breaks to see how many souls are lost. Though I can't grieve so much over the evil already done—that is irreparable—I would not want to see more of them lost each day.

5. O my Sisters in Christ, help me beg these things of the Lord. This is why He has gathered you together here. This is your vocation. These must be the business matters you're engaged in. These must be the things you desire, the things you weep about; these must be the objects of your petitions—not, my Sisters, the business matters of the world. For I laugh at and am even distressed about the things they come here to ask us to pray for: to ask His Majesty for wealth and money—and this is done by persons who I wish would ask Him for the grace

to trample everything underfoot. They are well intentioned, and in the end we pray for their intentions because of their devotion—although for myself I don't think the Lord ever hears me when I pray for these things. The world is all in flames; they want to sentence Christ again, so to speak, since they raise a thousand false witnesses against Him; they want to ravage His Church—and are we to waste time asking for things that if God were to give them we'd have one soul less in heaven? No, my Sisters, this is not the time to be discussing with God matters that have little importance.

6. Indeed, were I not to consider the human weakness that is consoled by receiving help in time of need (and it is good that we help in so far as we can), I'd be happy only if people understood that these are not the things they should be begging God for with so much care.

Chapter 2

Treats of how one should not worry about bodily needs and of the blessing there is in poverty.

DON'T THINK, my Sisters, that because you do not strive to please those who are in the world you will lack food. I assure you that such will not be the case. Never seek sustenance through human schemes, for you will die of hunger—and rightly so. Your eyes on your Spouse! He will sustain you. Once He is pleased, those least devoted to you will give you food even though they may not want to, as you have seen through experience. If in following this advice you should die of hunger, blessed be the nuns of St. Joseph's! For the love of the Lord, do not forget this. Since you have given up an income, give up worry about food. If you don't, everything will be lost. God wants some to have an income, and in their case it's all right for them to worry about their income since that goes with their vocation; but for us to worry, Sisters, would be absurd.

2. Worry about the financial resources of others, it seems to me, would amount to thinking about what others are enjoying.

Indeed, your worrying won't make the other change his thinking, nor will it inspire him with the idea to give alms. Leave this worrying to the One who can move all, for He is the Lord of money and of those who earn money. By His command we came here. His words are true; they cannot fail; rather, heaven and earth will fail.¹ Let us not fail Him; do not fear that He will fail you. And if some time He should fail you, it will be for a greater good. The lives of the saints failed when they were killed because of the Lord, but this happened so that through martyrdom their glory would be increased. It would be a good exchange to give up everything for the enjoyment of everlasting abundance.

3. Sisters, what I am saying is so important that I want you to remember it after my death—and that's why I'm leaving it for you in writing—for while I live I will remind you of it. I have seen by experience the great gain that comes from not worrying about such things. The less there is the more carefree I become. The Lord knows that, in my opinion, it distresses me more when we have a large surplus than when we are in need. I don't know if this is because I've experienced that the Lord immediately gives what we need. For us to worry about money would amount to deceiving the world, making ourselves poor in an exterior way but not being poor in spirit. I would feel scrupulous, so to speak, and it would seem to me as though a rich person were begging alms. Please God such may not be the case, for where there are too many cares about whether others will give us alms, sooner or later these cares will become habitual; or it could happen that we would go asking for what we have no need of, perhaps from someone more needy than we ourselves. Although those who give to us cannot lose anything but only gain, we would be losing. No, please God, my daughters! If you should start worrying like this, I would prefer that you have an income.

4. I beg you for the love of God and as an alms to me, in no way let your thoughts be taken up with these cares. If at any time such cares should be present in this house, let the youngest Sister cry out to His Majesty and bring the matter to the attention of the prioress. She may humbly tell the prioress

that the latter is mistaken, and so mistaken that little by little true poverty will be lost. I hope in the Lord that this will never happen and that He will not abandon His servants. May this book you have asked me to write, even if it do no more, serve to awaken you in these matters.

5. Believe me, my daughters, that for your good the Lord has given me a little understanding of the blessings that lie in holy poverty. Those who experience them will understand, though perhaps not as much as I. For not only had I failed to be poor in spirit, even though I professed it, but I was foolish in spirit. Poverty of spirit is a good that includes within itself all the good things of the world. [And I believe it has many of the good things contained in all the virtues. I am not saying this for certain, because I don't know the worth of each virtue. I will not speak about what in my opinion I do not understand well. But, for myself, I hold that poverty of spirit embraces many of the virtues.] In it lies great dominion. I say that it gives once again to one who doesn't care about the world's good things dominion over them all. What do kings and lords matter to me if I don't want their riches, or don't care to please them if in order to do so I would have to displease God in even the smallest thing? Nor what do I care about their honors if I have understood that the greatest honor of a poor person lies in the fact of his being truly poor?

6. In my opinion honor and money almost always go together; anyone who wants honor doesn't despise money, and anyone who despises money doesn't care much about honor. Let this be clearly understood, for it seems to me that the desire for honor always brings with it some interest in money or income. It would be a wonder if any poor person were honored in the world; on the contrary, even though he may be worthy of honor, he is little esteemed.² True poverty brings with it overwhelming honor. Poverty that is chosen for God alone has no need of pleasing anyone but Him. It is certain that in having need of no one a person has many friends. I have become clearly aware of this through experience.

7. So much is written about this virtue that I wouldn't know how to understand it all or still less speak of it. And so in order

not to do an injustice to this virtue by trying to praise it, I will say no more. I have only spoken of what I have seen through experience, and I confess that until now I have been so absorbed in speaking of these things that I did not realize I was doing so. But since I have written this, for the love of the Lord, keep in mind that holy poverty is our insignia and a virtue which at the beginning, when our order was founded, was so esteemed and well kept by our holy fathers. For I have been told, by someone who knows, that they did not keep anything for the next day. If exteriorly we do not carry out this practice so perfectly, let us strive to do so interiorly. Life lasts but a couple of hours; exceedingly great will be the reward. If we should do nothing else but what the Lord counseled us to do, the pay of just being able in some way to imitate Him would be great.

8. These are the insignia that must be on our coat of arms, for we must desire to observe poverty in every way: in houses, clothing, words, and most of all in thought. As long as you do this, have no fear that the religious life in this house will fail; God will help. As St. Clare said, great walls are those of poverty. She said that it was with walls like these, and those of humility, that she wanted to enclose her monasteries.³ Surely, if poverty is truly observed, recollection and all the other virtues will be much better fortified than with very sumptuous buildings. Be careful of buildings like these; I beg you for the love of God and by His precious blood. And if I can say this in good conscience, may such a building fall to the ground the day you construct one.⁴

9. It looks very bad, my daughters, if large houses are built with money from the poor. May God not allow it. The houses must be poor and small in every way. Let us in some manner resemble our King, who had no house but the stable in Bethlehem where He was born and the cross where He died. These were houses where there was little room for recreation. Those who build large ones know what they are doing; they have other holy intentions. But for thirteen poor little women, any corner should be enough.⁵ If it is necessary because of the extremely secluded life you live to have a stretch of land (and this even helps prayer and devotion) with some hermitages

where you can withdraw to pray, well and good. But no buildings, or large and ornate house. God deliver us from them! Always remember that everything will come tumbling down on the day of judgment. Who knows whether this will come soon?

10. Now it would not be right for the house of thirteen poor little women to make a loud crash when it falls; the truly poor must make no noise. They must be noiseless people so that others will take pity on them. And how they will rejoice when they see someone who was freed from hell because of the alms he gave them! That's all possible because they are much obliged to pray continually for the souls of their benefactors, since their food comes from them. The Lord also desires that, even though it comes from Him, we show gratitude to those persons through whose means He gives this food to us. Do not be negligent about showing gratitude.

11. I don't know what I began to say, for I have wandered off the subject. I believe the Lord wanted me to do so, for I never thought about saying what I have said here. May His Majesty always help us so that we never fail in the practice of poverty, amen.

Chapter 3

Continues the subject she began to discuss in the first chapter; she urges her Sisters always to busy themselves begging God to help those who labor for the Church. The chapter ends with an earnest plea.

TO RETURN TO THE MAIN REASON the Lord brought us together in this house and why I have greatly desired that we live so as to please His Majesty, I want to speak of helping to remedy the great evils I have seen. Human forces are not sufficient to stop the spread of this fire caused by these heretics, even though people have tried to see if with the force of arms they could remedy all the evil that is making such progress. It has seemed to me that what is necessary is a different approach, the approach of a lord when in time of war his land

is overrun with enemies and he finds himself restricted on all sides. He withdraws to a city that he has well fortified and from there sometimes strikes his foe. Those who are in the city, being chosen people, are such that they can do more by themselves than many cowardly soldiers can. And often victory is won in this way. At least, even though victory is not won, these chosen people are not conquered. For since they have no traitor, they cannot be conquered—unless through starvation. In this example the starvation cannot be such as to force them to surrender—to die, yes; but not to surrender.

2. But why have I said this? So that you understand, my Sisters, that what we must ask God is that in this little castle where there are already good Christians not one of us will go over to the enemy and that God will make the captains of this castle or city, who are the preachers and theologians, very advanced in the way of the Lord. Since most of them belong to religious orders, ask God that they advance very far in the perfection of religious life and their vocation; this is most necessary. For as I have said, it is the ecclesiastical, not the secular, arm that will save us. Since in neither the ecclesiastical nor the secular arm can we be of any help to our King, let us strive to be the kind of persons whose prayers can be useful in helping those servants of God who through much toil have strengthened themselves with learning and a good life and have labored so as now to help the Lord.

3. You may perhaps ask why I am stressing this so much, and saying that we must help those who are better than we ourselves are. I will tell you why: it is because I don't think that as yet you understand well how much you owe the Lord for bringing you here where you are so removed from business affairs, occasions of sin, and worldly occupations. Indeed, it is a very great mercy. As for those persons I mentioned, who are not free in this way, it is good that they are not free; more so in these times than in the past. They are the persons who must strengthen people who are weak, and encourage the little ones. A fine state things would be in—soldiers without captains! These persons must live among men, deal with men, live in palaces, and even sometimes outwardly behave as such men

do. Do you think, my daughters, that little is required for them to deal with the world, live in the world, engage in its business, and, as I said, resemble it in its conversation, while interiorly remaining its strangers, its enemies; in sum, not being men but angels? For if they do not live in this way, they do not deserve to be called captains; nor may the Lord allow them to leave their cells, for they will do more harm than good. This is not the time for seeing imperfections in those who must teach.

4. And if they are not interiorly fortified through an understanding of the importance of trampling everything underfoot, of detachment from things that come to an end, and of attachment to eternal things, they will show some sign of this lack no matter how much they try to conceal it. Is it not the world they have to deal with? Have no fear that the world will forgive this deficiency; nor is there any imperfection it fails to recognize. It will overlook many good things and perhaps not even consider them good; but have no fear that it will overlook any evil or imperfect things. Now I wonder who it is that teaches people in the world about perfection, not so much that these people might seek perfection (for it doesn't seem to them they have any obligation to do this, but they think they are doing enough if they keep the commandments reasonably well), but that they might condemn others. And at times what is virtuous seems to them luxury. So, then, do not think that little help from God is necessary for this great battle these preachers and theologians are fighting; a very great deal is necessary.

5. I beg you to strive to be such that we might merit from God two things: First, that among the numerous learned men and religious there be many who will meet these requirements I mentioned that are necessary for this battle, and that the Lord may prepare those who do not meet them; one who is perfect will do much more than many who are not. Second, that after being placed in this combat, which, as I say, is not easy, they may receive protection from the Lord so as to remain free of the many perils there are in the world, and stop their ears in order not to hear the siren's song on this dangerous sea. If we can obtain some answers from God to these requests, we shall be fighting for Him even though we are very cloistered. And if

some of our requests are answered, I would consider well worthwhile the trials I have suffered in order to found this little corner, where I have also sought that this rule of our Lady and Empress be observed with the perfection with which it was observed when initiated.

6. Do not think it is useless to have these petitions¹ continually in your heart, for with some persons it seems a difficult thing for them not to be praying a great deal for their own soul. But what better prayer is there than these petitions I mentioned? If you are uneasy because you think your sufferings in purgatory will not be shortened, know that by this prayer they will be; and if you must still pay some debts, so be it. What would it matter were I to remain in purgatory until judgment day if through my prayer I could save even one soul? How much less would it matter if my prayer is to the advantage of many and for the honor of the Lord. Pay no attention to sufferings that come to an end if through them some greater service is rendered to Him who endured so many for us. Always try to be informed about what is more perfect [for as I will ask you later, and will give my reasons, you must always communicate with learned men].

So, then, I beg you for the love of the Lord to ask His Majesty to hear us in this matter. Miserable though I am, I ask His Majesty this since it is for His glory and the good of the Church; this glory and good is the object of my desires.

7. It seems bold that I think I could play some role in obtaining an answer to these petitions. I trust, my Lord, in these Your servants who live here, and I know they desire and strive for nothing else than to please You. For You they renounced the little they had – and would have wanted to have more so as to serve You with it. Since You, my Creator, are not ungrateful, I think You will not fail to do what they beg of You. Nor did You, Lord, when You walked in the world, despise women; rather, You always, with great compassion, helped them. [And You found as much love and more faith in them than You did in men. Among them was Your most blessed Mother, and through her merits – and because we wear her habit – we merit what, because of our offenses, we do not

deserve. Is it not enough, Lord, that the world has intimidated us . . . so that we may not do anything worthwhile for You in public or dare speak some truths that we lament over in secret, without Your also failing to hear so just a petition? I do not believe, Lord, that this could be true of Your goodness and justice, for You are a just judge and not like those of the world. Since the world's judges are sons of Adam and all of them men, there is no virtue in women that they do not hold suspect. Yes, indeed, the day will come, my King, when everyone will be known for what he is. I do not speak for myself, because the world already knows my wickedness—and I have rejoiced that this wickedness is known publicly—but because I see that these are times in which it would be wrong to undervalue virtuous and strong souls, even though they are women.]² When we ask You for honors, income, money, or worldly things, do not hear us. But when we ask You for the honor of Your Son, why wouldn't You hear us, eternal Father, for the sake of Him who lost a thousand honors and a thousand lives for You? Not for us, Lord, for we don't deserve it, but for the blood of Your Son and His merits.

8. O eternal Father, see to it that so many lashes and injuries and such heavy torments are not forgotten! How then, my Creator, can a heart as loving as Yours allow that the deeds done by Your Son with such ardent love and so as to make us more pleasing to You (for You commanded that He love us) be esteemed so little? For nowadays these heretics have so little regard for the Blessed Sacrament that they take away its dwelling places by destroying churches. Was something still to be done to please You? But He did everything. Wasn't it enough, eternal Father, that while He lived He did not have a place to lay His head—³ and always in the midst of so many trials? But now they take away the places He has at present for inviting His friends, for He realizes that we are weak and knows that the laborers must be nourished with such food. Hasn't He already paid far more than enough for the sin of Adam? Whenever we sin again must this loving Lamb pay? Don't allow this, my Emperor! Let Your Majesty be at once appeased! Do not look at our sins but behold that Your most blessed Son redeemed us,

and behold His merits and those of His glorious Mother and of so many saints and martyrs who died for You!

9. Ay, what a pity, Lord, and who has dared to make this petition on behalf of all of us? What a bad intermediary, my daughters, is she who seeks to be heard and to make such a petition for you! Indeed, this sovereign Judge should become more indignant—and rightly and justly so—at seeing me so bold! But behold, my Lord, that You are a God of mercy; have mercy on this little sinner, this little worm that is so bold with You. Behold, my God, my desires and the tears with which I beg this of You; forget my deeds because of who You are; have pity on so many souls that are being lost, and help Your Church. Don't allow any more harm to come to Christianity, Lord. Give light now to these darknesses.

10. I ask you, my Sisters, for the love of the Lord, to recommend to His Majesty this poor little thing, and beg Him to give her humility. Do this as something you are obliged to do. I am not requesting you to pray in particular for kings and prelates in the Church, especially our bishop.⁴ I see you now so careful about doing so that it doesn't seem necessary for me to insist. Let those who are to come realize that if the bishop is holy the subjects will be so too; and as something very important always ask this of the Lord in your prayers. And when your prayers, desires, disciplines, and fasts are not directed toward obtaining these things I mentioned, reflect on how you are not accomplishing or fulfilling the purpose for which the Lord brought you here together. [And may the Lord because of who His Majesty is never allow you to forget this.]

Chapter 4

Urges the observance of the rule and discusses three things that are important for the spiritual life. Explains the first of these, which is love of neighbor, and how particular friendships do harm.¹

NOW, DAUGHTERS, you have seen the great task we have undertaken [for the prelate and bishop who is your superior and for the order, already included in what was mentioned, since all is for the good of the Church; and to pray for the Church is an obligation]. What do you think we must be like if we are not to be considered very bold by God and the world? Clearly, we must work hard, and it helps a great deal to have lofty thoughts so that we will exert ourselves and make our deeds comply with our thoughts. For if we strive to observe our rule and constitutions very carefully, I hope in the Lord that our prayers will be heard. I am not beseeching you to do something new, my daughters, but only that we observe what we profess; to observe this is our vocation and obligation—although there are many degrees of observance.

2. Our primitive rule states that we must pray without ceasing.² If we do this with all the care possible—for unceasing prayer is the most important aspect of the rule—the fasts, the disciplines, and the silence the order commands will not be wanting. For you already know that if prayer is to be genuine, it must be helped by these other things; prayer and comfortable living are incompatible.

3. It is about prayer that you asked me to say something, and I beg you that in recompense for what I am going to say you eagerly do what I have said up until now, and read it often. Before I say anything about interior matters, that is, about prayer, I shall mention some things that are necessary for those who seek to follow the way of prayer; so necessary that even if these persons are not very contemplative, they can be far advanced in the service of the Lord if they possess these things. And if they do not possess them, it is impossible for them to be very contemplative. And if they think they are, they are being

highly deceived. May the Lord help me speak of these things, and may he teach me what I am about to say so that it may be for his glory, amen.

4. Do not think, my friends and daughters, that I shall burden you with many things; please God, we shall do what our holy fathers established and observed, for by walking this path they themselves established they merited this title we give them. It would be wrong to seek another way or try to learn about this path from anyone else. I shall enlarge on only three things, which are from our own constitutions, for it is very important that we understand how much the practice of these three things helps us to possess inwardly and outwardly the peace our Lord recommended so highly to us. The first of these is love for one another; the second is detachment from all created things; the third is true humility, which, even though I speak of it last, is the main practice and embraces all the others.

5. About the first, love for one another, it is most important that we have this, for there is nothing annoying that is not suffered easily by those who love one another — a thing would have to be extremely annoying before causing any displeasure. And if this commandment were observed in the world as it should be, I think such love would be very helpful for the observance of the other commandments. But, because of either excess or defect, we never reach the point of observing this commandment perfectly.

It may seem that having excessive love among ourselves could not be evil, but such excess carries with it so much evil and so many imperfections that I don't think anyone will believe this save the one who has been an eyewitness. The devil lays many snares here, for this excess is hardly noticed by persons having consciences that deal only roughly with pleasing God, and the excess even seems to them virtuous; but those who are interested in perfection have a deep understanding of this excessive love, because little by little it takes away the strength of will to be totally occupied in loving God.

6. I believe this excessive love must be found among women even more than among men; and the harm it does in the com-

munity is well known. It gives rise to the following: failing to love equally all the others; feeling sorry about any affront to the friend; desiring possessions so as to give her gifts; looking for time to speak with her, and often so as to tell her that you hold her dear and other trifling things rather than about your love for God. For these great friendships are seldom directed toward helping one love God more. On the contrary, I think the devil gets them started so as to promote factions in religious orders. For when love is in the service of His Majesty, the will does not proceed with passion but proceeds by seeking help to conquer other passions.

7. I should like that there be many of these friendships where there is a large community, but in this house where there are no more than thirteen—nor must there be any more³—all must be friends, all must be loved, all must be held dear, all must be helped. Watch out for these friendships, for love of the Lord, however holy they may be; even among brothers they can be poisonous. I see no benefit in them. And if the friends are relatives, the situation is much worse—it's a pestilence!⁴ And believe me, daughters, even though this kind of talk seems extreme, great perfection and great peace lie in keeping my advice; and many occasions are removed from those who are not strong. But if the will should be inclined to one more than to another (this cannot be helped, for it is natural and we are often drawn to love the worst one if that person is endowed with more natural graces), let us be careful not to allow ourselves to be dominated by that affection. Let us love the virtues and interior good, and always studiously avoid paying attention to this exterior element.

8. Let us not condescend, oh daughters, to allow our wills to be slaves to anyone, save to the One who bought it with His blood.⁵ Be aware that, without understanding how, you will find yourselves so attached that you will be unable to manage the attachment. Oh, God help me, the silly things that come from such attachment are too numerous to be counted. And because these things are so minute that only the one who sees such friendship will understand and believe what is said about them, there's no reason to say any more here—except that such

a friendship is bad when found in anyone; but when found in the prioress it's a pestilence.

9. To break away from these friendships involving a particular fondness, great care is necessary at the outset of the friendship. This breaking away should be done delicately and lovingly rather than harshly. In providing a remedy it is important that the friends avoid being together and speaking to each other save at the designated hours. This would be in conformity with the custom we now follow, which is that we are not to be together but each one alone in her own cell, as the rule commands.⁶ At St. Joseph's the nuns should be excused from having a common workroom, for although having one is a laudable custom, silence is better observed when each nun is by herself; and to get used to solitude is a great help for prayer. Since prayer must be the foundation of this house, it is necessary that we strive to dedicate ourselves to what most helps us in prayer.

10. Returning to the subject of our loving one another, it seems pointless to be recommending this love. For are there persons who can be so like brutes that they will not love each other even though they must always deal with and be in the company of one another and have no dealings and no recreation with persons outside the house and believe that God loves them and they Him, since for His sake they have left everything? I say this especially since virtue always inspires love, and I hope in His Majesty that those living in this house will with the help of God always be virtuous. So, in my opinion, I don't have to recommend this love a great deal.

11. What I would like to say a little about now is how this love for one another must be practiced. I would like to speak also of the nature of this virtuous love — which is the love I want practiced here — and how we know if we have this love; for our Lord recommended it so highly and so urgently to His apostles.⁷ What I say will be in conformity with my dullness of mind; and if in other books you find a detailed explanation don't take anything from me, for perhaps I don't know what I'm talking about.

12. Two kinds of love are what I'm dealing with: One kind is spiritual, because it in no way seems to stir sensuality or affect

the tenderness of our nature so as to take away purity. The other is spiritual mixed with our sensuality and weakness or good love, for it seems to be licit, as is love for our relatives and friends. I have already said something about it.⁸

13. I want to speak now about the love that is spiritual, that which is not affected by any passion; where passion is present the good order is thrown into complete disorder. And if we deal with virtuous persons discreetly and moderately, especially confessors, we will benefit. But if you should become aware that the confessor is turning toward some vanity, be suspicious about everything and in no way carry on conversations with him even though they may seem to be good, but make your confession briefly and bring it to a conclusion. And it would be best to tell the prioress that your soul doesn't get on well with him and change confessors. That would be the most proper thing to do—if you can do it without hurting his reputation.

14. In similar cases and others as well, in which the devil could ensnare one in many difficulties and in which one does not know what counsel to take, the best thing to do is try to speak with some learned person; when necessary there should be the freedom to do this. Make your confession to him and do what he tells you to do about the matter; for since one must provide some remedy, one could fall into great error. How many mistakes have been made in the world by doing things without counsel, especially in matters that could be harmful to someone! Failing to provide a remedy cannot be allowed; for unless the devil is quickly cut short, the effect will not be something of minor importance when he begins to interfere. Thus what I have said about trying to speak with another confessor is what is best to do, provided that there be an opportunity; and I hope in the Lord there will be.

15. Keep in mind that this is a very important point, for such friendship is dangerous, harmful, and a hell for all the Sisters. I say that you must not wait until you recognize that serious evil is present, but you should in the beginning cut the relationship short by every possible and knowable means. In good conscience you can do so. But I hope in the Lord that He will not permit that persons who must always be engaged in

prayer will be able to love anyone who is not the Lord's great servant. That they ought not is very certain — or else they have neither the prayer nor the perfection that is in conformity with our goal here. For if they see that a person doesn't understand their language and doesn't love to speak of God, they will not be able to love him, because he will not be like them. If he is like them, since the opportunities for these servants of God to engage in such friendship are so few, he will not want to disturb them; or he will be a simpleton.

16. Now I have begun to speak about this matter because, as I have said,⁹ the harm the devil can here cause is great, and only very slowly is it recognized; thus perfection can be gradually vitiated without one's knowing why. For if this confessor wants to allow room for vanity, because he himself is vain, he makes little of it even in others. May God, because of who He is, deliver us from such things. A situation like this would be enough to disturb all the nuns because their consciences tell them the opposite of what their confessor does. And if they are restricted to only one confessor, they don't know what to do or how to be at peace. For the one who should be calming them and providing a remedy is the one who is causing the harm. There must be a lot of these kinds of affliction in some places. It makes me feel great pity, and so you shouldn't be surprised if I have tried to explain this danger to you.

Chapter 5

Continues on the subject of confessors. Speaks of the importance of their being learned.

MAY THE LORD, because of who He is, not allow anyone in this house to undergo the trial that has been mentioned; that is, to find oneself in this affliction of body and soul. Nor may He allow a situation in which if the prioress gets along well with the confessor no one dares to speak either to

him about her or to her about him. The result of this state of affairs will be the temptation to omit the confession of very serious sins for fear of being disturbed. O God help me, what harm the devil can cause here, and how dearly the nuns will pay for this restriction and concern about honor! For while they think that by dealing with no more than one confessor they are doing something great for religious life and the reputation of the monastery, the devil manages in this way to catch souls, since he cannot in any other. If they ask to go to another confessor, it immediately seems as if the peace and harmony of religious life will be lost. Or if the desired confessor is not from the same order, merely speaking with him, even though he may be a saint [Jerome], is taken as an affront by the others. [Praise God very much, daughters, for this freedom that you have, since you are able here to speak to others—though not too many others—besides your ordinary confessors, and these will give you light about everything.]¹

2. I ask, for the love of the Lord, that this holy freedom be allowed by the one who is superior. May she always ask permission from the bishop or the provincial that, besides speaking with the ordinary confessors, she and all the others might sometimes speak and discuss their souls with learned persons, especially if the confessors, however good, may not be learned.² Learning is a great help for shedding light upon every matter. It will be possible to find both learning and goodness in some persons. And the more the Lord favors you in prayer, the more necessary it will be that your prayer and good works have a good foundation.

3. You already know that the cornerstone must be a good conscience and that with all your strength you must strive to free yourselves even from venial sins and seek what is the most perfect. It will seem to you that any confessor knows this, but that is misleading. It happened to me that I spoke about matters of conscience with a confessor who had gone through the whole course of theology, and he did me a great deal of harm by telling me that some matters didn't amount to anything. I know that he didn't intend to misinform me and had no reason to, but he simply didn't know any more. And the same thing

happened to me with two or three others, besides the one I mentioned.³

4. Having true light at our disposal for the sake of keeping the law of God with perfection is all our good; prayer is well founded on such light. Without this strong foundation and if the Sisters are not given freedom to confess and discuss their souls with persons like those I have mentioned, the whole building will be wobbly. [Thus they must speak to spiritual and learned persons. If the appointed confessor is not spiritual and learned, they should at times seek out others. And if, perhaps, they receive orders not to confess to others, they can speak outside of confession to the kind of person I mentioned.] And I dare say more, that even if the confessor has all the qualities I mentioned, it is good sometimes to consult others because it is still possible for him to be mistaken; and it is important that not all be misled by him. One should seek always that there be nothing contrary to obedience, for there are ways and means for everything. And so it is good that in all possible ways one seek such counsel that is so valuable to souls.

5. All this that I have said should be of concern to the prioress. So I beg her again that, since no other consolation is sought here than the soul's, she should seek the soul's consolation by doing what I said. For there are different paths along which God leads souls, and one confessor perhaps will not know them all. I assure you there will not be lacking holy persons who will want to speak to you about your souls and bring you comfort—if your souls are what they should be—even though you may be poor. He who sustains your bodies will awaken someone and give him the desire to enlighten your souls and bring a remedy to this evil that I fear. For even if the devil tempts a confessor so as to deceive him about some doctrine, he will be careful and consider with caution everything he does when he knows that you speak to others.

Once this entrance has been taken away from the devil, I hope in God he will not find another one in this house. So I beg the bishop, whoever he may be, for love of the Lord, to allow

the Sisters this freedom and not take it away from them when the persons they consult possess learning and goodness, a fact they can easily get to know in a city as small as this.⁴

6. I have seen and understood what I have mentioned here, and discussed it with learned and holy persons who have considered what was most suitable for this house so that there would be progress along the path of perfection. Among dangers, which are always present as long as we live, we find that this one is a lesser one. The vicar⁵ should never have a free hand to come and go, nor should the confessor have this freedom. Rather, they should be protecting the recollection and decorum of the house and its progress, both interior and exterior, and should tell the bishop when there is some fault; but neither the vicar nor the confessor should be the superior.⁶

7. This is our practice at present—but not merely because of my opinion. The bishop we now have, under whose obedience we are (for many reasons obedience was not given to the order),⁷ is a person fond of religious life and holiness and is a great servant of God. (His name is Don Alvaro de Mendoza; he is of high nobility and lineage and very fond of favoring this house in every way.) He gathered persons of learning, spirituality, and experience together in order to deal with this point; and freedom was decided upon. It is only right that the superiors who follow should hold to this opinion; it was decided upon by such good persons and sought from God with many prayers for enlightenment about the best thing to do. And from what has been known up until the present, this practice certainly is the best thing. May the Lord be pleased to preserve it always since it is for His greater glory, amen.

Chapter 6

Returns to the subject already begun, that of perfect love.

IHAVE DIGRESSED ENOUGH, but what was said is so important that anyone who understands it will not blame me.

Let us return now to the love that it is good for us to have, that which I say is purely spiritual.¹ I don't know if I know what I am saying. At least I don't think it's necessary to speak much about this love, because few have it. Let the one to whom the Lord has given it praise Him very much because such a person must have reached the highest perfection. Anyway, I want to say a little about this love. Doing so will perhaps be of some benefit; for when virtue is placed before our eyes, the one who desires it grows fond of it and seeks to gain it.

2. May it please God that I understand this love; and even more, that I know how to speak of it. For I don't think I know which love is spiritual, or when sensual love is mixed with spiritual love, nor do I know why I want to speak about this spiritual love. My situation is like that of one who hears others speaking in the distance but doesn't understand what they are saying. So it is that sometimes I don't think I understand what I'm saying, but the Lord wills that it be well said. If at other times what I say is nonsense, that is what is most natural to me—not being correct in anything.

3. Now it seems to me that those whom God brings to a certain clear knowledge love very differently than do those who have not reached it. This clear knowledge is about the nature of the world, that there is another world, about the difference between the one and the other, that the one is eternal and the other a dream; or about the nature of loving the Creator and loving the creature (and this seen through experience, which is entirely different from merely thinking about it or believing it); or this knowledge comes from seeing and feeling what is gained by the one love and lost by the other, and what the Creator is and what the creature is, and from many other things that the Lord teaches to anyone who wants to be taught by Him in prayer, or whom His Majesty desires to teach.

4. It may be, Sisters, that you will think it useless for me to speak of this love and that you will say everybody already knows these things I have mentioned. May it please the Lord that this be so, that you know them in such a way that they be important to you and impressed deep within your being. For if

you have this knowledge, you will see that I do not lie in saying that whoever the Lord brings to the state of perfection has this love. The persons the Lord brings to this state are generous souls, majestic souls. They are not content with loving something as wretched as these bodies, however beautiful they may be, however attractive. Yes, it pleases them to see such bodies, and they praise the Creator; but, no, they do not stop there. I mean stop in such a way that they love these things. It would seem to them that they were loving something of no substance, loving a shadow. They would feel chagrin, and they wouldn't have the courage, without great shame, to tell God they love Him.

5. You will tell me that such perfect persons do not know how to love or repay the love others have for them—at least, they care little about being loved. At times nature suddenly rejoices at being loved, but then when these persons return to themselves they see that this is foolish, unless the souls of the others will benefit either by doctrine or by prayer. All other affection wearies these persons, for they understand that no benefit comes from it and that it could be harmful. But this does not make these persons ungrateful or unwilling to repay the love of others by recommending them to God. They entrust to the Lord the care of those who love them, for they understand that the love comes from Him. It doesn't seem there is anything within themselves to love, and they immediately think they are loved because these others love God. They leave it to His Majesty to repay those who love them, and they beg Him to do so. In this way they remain free, for it seems to them that repaying the love is not their business. And, in fact, I think at times that if love does not come from those persons who can help us gain the blessings of the perfect, there would be great blindness in this desire to be loved.

6. Now, note well that when we desire love from some person, there is always a kind of seeking our own benefit or satisfaction, and these perfect persons have already trampled underfoot all the good things and comforts the world has to offer them. Their consolations are of a kind that even though they may desire them, so to speak, they cannot tolerate having

them apart from God or from speaking of Him. For what benefit can come to them from being loved?

7. Since this truth is made known to them, they laugh at themselves because of the affliction they once suffered as to whether or not their love was repaid. Although our affection is good, the desire that it be repaid is very natural. But once we receive the payment, we realize that the pay is all straw; it's all air and without substance so that the wind carries it away. No matter how much we have been loved, what is there that remains for us? As a result, you shouldn't care whether you are loved or not, unless the love is for your spiritual benefit as in the case of those perfect souls I mentioned, for they realize that our nature is such that if we are not loved we soon grow weary.

It will seem to you that such persons do not love or know anyone but God. I say, yes they do love, with a much greater and more genuine love, and with passion, and with a more beneficial love; in short, it is love. And these souls are more inclined to give than to receive. Even with respect to the Creator Himself they want to give more than to receive. I say that this attitude is what merits the name "love," for these other base attachments have usurped the name "love."

8. You will also wonder what they have affection for if they do not love because of the things they see. It is true that what they see they love and what they hear they become attached to; but the things that they see are stable. As soon as these persons love, they go beyond the bodies and turn their eyes to the soul and look to see if there is something to love in the soul. And if there isn't anything lovable, but they see some beginning and readiness so that if they love this soul and dig in this mine they will find gold, their labor causes them no pain. Nothing could be presented to them that they wouldn't eagerly do for the good of this soul, for they desire to continue loving it; but they know that if it does not love God very much and have His blessings, their loving it is impossible. And I say that this is impossible, no matter how much they are obligated to it; and even if it dies with love for them and does all the good works it can for them and possesses all natural graces combined, their wills will not have the strength to love it or make this love last. These

persons with perfect love already have experience and know what everything is; they will not be deceived. They see that they are not at one with the other and that it is impossible for the two to continue loving each other. For it is a love that must end when they die if the other is not keeping the law of God, and these persons understand that the other does not love God and that the two must then go to their different destinies.

9. And one of these persons to whom the Lord has given true wisdom cannot esteem this love, which lasts only here on earth, for more than what it is worth, or even for less. Those who like to find their pleasure in the things of the world, in its delights, honors, and riches will attribute some value to whether the other is rich or has the means to provide for diversion and recreation. But whoever has already come to abhor all of this cares little or nothing about such things.

Well now in the case of perfect love, if a person loves there is the passion to make the other soul worthy of being loved, for, as I say, this person knows that otherwise he will not continue to love the other. It is a love that costs dearly. This person does everything he can for the other's benefit; he would lose a thousand lives that a little good might come to the other soul. O precious love that imitates the Commander-in-chief of love, Jesus, our Good!

Chapter 7

Treats of the same subject, spiritual love, and gives some advice on how to obtain it.

IT'S STRANGE HOW IMPASSIONED THIS LOVE IS, the tears it costs, the penances and prayer; what concern to ask prayers for the one loved from all who it thinks can help that person toward God; what constant desire that others recommend him to God. It is not happy unless it sees that person make progress. If, on the other hand, it sees him improving and then sees him turning back somewhat, there doesn't seem to be any pleasure for it in life. It neither eats nor sleeps

without this care about the other. It is always fearful lest the soul it loves so much be lost and the two be separated forever. Death here below matters nothing to it, for it doesn't want to become attached to anything that in a mere moment escapes from one's hand and cannot be grasped again. It is, as I said,¹ a love with no self-interest at all. All that it desires or wants is to see the other soul rich with heavenly blessings.

2. This is what love is, and not these other miserable earthly affections—although I don't mean evil ones, for God deliver us from them. We must never tire of condemning anything that leads to hell, for the slightest evil of hell cannot be exaggerated. We shouldn't let our mouths utter even a word about this sinful love, Sisters, nor should we think that it exists in the world. We shouldn't listen to anything said about it, whether this be done in jest or in truth. Do not allow that this type of love be spoken of or discussed in your presence. Such love has nothing good in it, and even hearing about it can be harmful. You may speak about the licit love I mentioned, which we have for one another or for relatives and friends and in which our care is that our loved ones don't die; or, if the other's head aches our souls seem to ache too, and if they suffer trials, it seems that we lose our patience; and other things like that.

3. Spiritual love is not like this. Even though some grief is at first felt through natural weakness, reason immediately considers whether the trial is good for the one loved, whether there is an enrichment in virtue and how that soul bears the suffering; it asks God to give the other patience and merit in the trials. If this love sees that the other person has patience, no distress is felt; rather it rejoices and is consoled. This love would much rather suffer the trial itself than see the other suffer it if the merit and gain that lies in suffering could be given to the other entirely—but not because this love is disquieted and disturbed.

4. I say once again² that spiritual love seems to be imitating that love which the good lover Jesus had for us. Hence, these lovers advance so far because they embrace all trials, and the others, without trial, receive benefit from those who love. And

believe me, either these lovers will cut off their relationship—I mean special friendship—or they will obtain from our Lord that the one loved walk along their own way toward the same goal, as did St. Monica with St. Augustine. These lovers cannot in their hearts be insincere with those they love; if they see them deviate from the path or commit some faults they immediately tell them about it. They cannot help but do so. And since they are not going to change their attitude, nor are they going to flatter or hide anything from the other, either that other person mends his ways or the friendship is broken. For these lovers cannot suffer such a thing, nor should it be suffered. There is a continual war between the two attitudes these lovers have; on the one hand they go about forgetful of the whole world, taking no account of whether others serve God or not but only keeping account of themselves; on the other hand, with their friends, they have no power to do this, nor is anything covered over; they see the tiniest speck. I say that they bear a truly heavy cross. [Oh fortunate are the souls loved by such as these! Fortunate was the day they came to know them! O my Lord, would you not be doing me a favor if there were many who so loved me? Certainly, it would be more beneficial to me than if I were loved by all the kings and lords of the world; and rightly so, for these persons strive in as many ways as they can that we ourselves be lords of that very world and that all things be subject to us.

When you know some person like this, Sisters, let the Mother prioress diligently strive that he speak with you. Love such persons as much as you like. They must be few, but the Lord does desire that it be known when someone has reached perfection. You will be immediately told that speaking with him is unnecessary, that it is enough to have God. But a good means to having God is to speak with His friends, for one always gains very much from this. I know through experience. After the Lord, it is because of persons like these that I am not in hell, for I was always very attached to their praying for me, and so I strove to get them to do this. Now let us return to our subject.]

5. This spiritual love is the kind of love I would desire us to have. Even though in the beginning it is not so perfect, the

Lord will gradually perfect it. Let us begin by using the suitable means, for even though the love bears with it some natural tenderness no harm will be done provided this tenderness is shown toward all. It is good and necessary sometimes in loving to show and also have affection, and to feel some of the trials and sicknesses of the Sisters, even though these may be small. For at times it happens that some trifle will cause as much suffering to one as a great trial will to another; little things can bring much distress to persons who have sensitive natures. [And do not be surprised, for perhaps the devil employed all his energy here, more energy than what he uses when you feel great sufferings and trials.] If you are not like them, do not fail to be compassionate. And perhaps our Lord desires to exempt us from these sufferings, whereas in other matters we will suffer. And those sufferings that for us are heavy—even if in themselves they truly are—may be light for another. So in these matters let us not judge from ourselves, nor let us think that we are at a stage in which perhaps the Lord without our own effort has made us stronger, but let us think of the stage we were at when we were weaker.

6. Consider that this advice is important for knowing how to sympathize with your neighbor in his trials, however small they may be. This is especially true in the case of those souls that were mentioned.³ Since they desire trials they make little of everything, and it is very necessary that they take the time to remember how they themselves were once weak and that if they are not weak now, their strength doesn't come from themselves. For it could be that the devil by this means will make charity toward one's neighbor grow cold, and make us think that what in reality is a fault belongs to perfection. It is necessary to be careful and awake in everything, for he does not sleep. This is truer in the case of those advancing in perfection. The temptations are then very deceiving, since the devil wouldn't dare anything else. It doesn't seem the harm is recognized until it is already done—if, as I say, one doesn't take care. In sum, it is necessary to watch and pray always, for there is no better remedy than prayer for discovering these secret things of the devil and bringing them to light.

7. Strive also to take time for recreation with the Sisters when there is need and during the time set aside for it by custom, even though this may not be to your pleasure, for everything done with a pure intention is perfect love. [And so it is that when I desire to speak of that other love that is not so perfect, I do not find in this house any path in which I think it would be good for us to have such love. For however good this love might be, everything must hark back to its origin, which is the perfect love I spoke of. I thought of saying much about this other love, and now that I've come to discuss its fine points, I don't think it fits our way of life. So, I want to leave the matter as it stands; I hope in God that in this house there will be no opportunity for any other kind of love than perfect love, even though our love may not be entirely perfect.] Thus, it is very good that some take pity on others in their need. Let them take care that there be no lack of discretion in things that would go against obedience. Even though within yourself the prioress' commands may seem harsh, don't show this or let anyone know about it—unless, with humility, the prioress herself—for you would cause much harm. And learn how to understand which are the things one ought to feel sorry about and take pity on with regard to the Sisters. And always grieve over any fault, if it is publicly known, that you see in a Sister. Here love shows itself, and it is practiced well when you know how to suffer the fault and not be surprised; so the others will do with respect to your faults, for you may have many more than you are aware of. Recommend the Sister to God and strive yourself to practice with great perfection the virtue opposite the fault that appears in her. Make every effort to do this so that you teach that Sister in deed what perhaps through words or punishment she might not understand or profit by; and the imitation of the virtue in which one sees another excel has a great tendency to spread. This is good advice; don't forget it.

8. Oh, how good and true will be the love of the Sister who can help others by setting aside her own advantage for their sake. She will make much progress in all the virtues and keep her rule with great perfection. Better friendship will this be than all the tender words that can be uttered, for these are not

used, nor should they be used, in this house; those like, “my life,” “my soul,” “my only good,” and other similar expressions addressed now to one, now to another, of the Sisters. Keep these words of affection for your Spouse, for you must be with Him so much and so alone that you will need to be helped by everything; His Majesty allows us to use these words with Him. But if they are used a lot among ourselves, they will not be so touching when used with the Lord. And besides, there’s no reason for using them. They are very womanish, and I would not want you, my daughters, to be womanish in anything, nor would I want you to be like women but like strong men. For if you do what lies in your power, the Lord will make you so strong that you will astonish men. And how easy this is for His Majesty since He made us from nothing.

9. Another very good proof of love is that you strive in household duties to relieve others of work, and also rejoice and praise the Lord very much for any increase you see in their virtues. All these things, not to mention the great good they contain in themselves, help very much to further peace and conformity between the Sisters, as we now, by God’s goodness, see through experience. May it please His Majesty that this love always continue. The contrary would be a terrible thing, and very difficult to endure: that is, few in number and disunited. God forbid.⁴

10. If by chance some little word should escape, try to remedy the matter immediately and pray intensely. And if things of this sort against charity continue, such as little factions, or ambition, or concern about some little point of honor (for I think my blood freezes when I write about this and think that at some time it could happen, because I see it is the main evil in monasteries); when these things begin to take place consider yourselves lost. Think and believe that you have thrown your Spouse out of the house and have made it necessary for Him to go in search of another dwelling, since you threw Him out of His own house. Cry out to His Majesty. Seek a remedy; for if you don’t find one after such frequent confession and Communion, there is reason to fear a Judas among you.

11. Let the prioress for the love of God watch carefully that

no place be given to such concerns, and root them out from the beginning; from whether she does this or not will stem either all the harm or all the remedy. [And if love doesn't suffice to do this, let it be done with severe punishments.] And anyone found to be the cause of such disturbance should be sent to another monastery, for God will provide her with the dowry. Get rid of this pestilence; cut off the branches as best you can, and if this is not enough pull up the roots. And if that doesn't work, do not let the one who is taken up with these things leave the prison cell. That's much better than letting so incurable a pestilence infect all the nuns. Oh, how great an evil it is! God deliver us from the monastery where it enters; I would rather that the monastery catch fire and all be burned. Because I believe I shall say something about this elsewhere—since it is something so important—I'll not enlarge on it any more here.⁵

Chapter 8

The great good that lies in detaching oneself inwardly and outwardly from all created things.

NOW LET US TALK ABOUT the detachment we ought to have, for detachment, if it is practiced with perfection, includes everything. I say it includes everything because if we embrace the Creator and care not at all for the whole of creation, His Majesty will infuse the virtues. Doing little by little what we can, we will have hardly anything else to fight against; it is the Lord who in our defense takes up the battle against the demons and against the world.

Do you think, Sisters, it is a small blessing we receive in obtaining this grace to give ourselves to the All entirely and without reserve? And since in Him are all blessings, as I say, let us praise Him very much, Sisters, for having brought us together here where the only concern is to give ourselves entirely to Him. Indeed, I don't know why I am saying this because

every one of you here can teach me. I confess that in this matter so important I am not as perfect as I desire or understand to be fitting. And this goes for all the virtues and all that I say here, for it is much easier to write about these things than to put them into practice. And I don't even succeed in writing about them, because sometimes knowing how to speak of them requires experience; and if I do succeed, it is perhaps by writing of the opposite of what I have practiced.

2. With regard to externals, obviously we are separated here from everything. [I think the Lord wants all of us He has gathered together in this house to withdraw from everything so that His Majesty may unite us to Himself here without any hindrance. O my Creator and Lord! When did I merit such honor? For it seems you went a roundabout way to bring us closer to Yourself. May it please Your goodness that we do not lose through our own fault this nearness to You.] O Sisters, understand, for the love of God, the great favor the Lord has granted those whom he brought here. Each of you should reflect upon this carefully, for there are only twelve here and His Majesty desired that you be one of them.¹ And how many there are who are better than I, who I know would take this place eagerly, and the Lord gave it to me who so poorly deserved it! May You be blessed, my God, and may all creatures praise You! One cannot repay You for this favor—as is likewise so for many others You have granted me—for my vocation to be a nun was a very great favor! Since I have been so miserable, You did not trust me, Lord. Instead of keeping me where there were so many living together and where my wretchedness would not have been so clearly seen during my lifetime, You have brought me to a place where, since there are so few nuns, it seems impossible for this wretchedness not to be known. That I might walk more carefully, You have removed from me all opportunities to conceal it. Now I confess there is no longer an excuse for me, Lord, and so I have greater need of Your mercy that You might pardon any fault I may have.²

3. What I ask of you, Sisters, is that if anyone sees within herself that she is unable to follow what is customarily practiced here she say so; there are other monasteries where the

Lord is also served. Do not disturb these few nuns brought here together by His Majesty. In other places there is the freedom to find relief by being with relatives; here if some relatives are allowed to visit, it is that they might find relief by being with us. But the nun who desires to see them for her own consolation, if these relatives are not spiritual persons, should consider herself imperfect. She ought to believe that she is not detached, not healthy; she will not possess freedom of spirit; she will not possess complete peace. She needs a doctor; and I say that if this attachment is not removed and she is not cured, she is not meant for this house.

4. The best remedy I know is that she not see them until obviously she is free and obtains this freedom from the Lord through much prayer. When it is clear that she considers these visits a cross, it will be all right for her to see them, for then she will be of benefit to her relatives and not be harmed herself. [But if she loves her relatives, if she grieves a great deal over their sufferings and eagerly listens to what they tell her about their business affairs in the world, she should believe that she will bring harm to herself and no good to them.]

Chapter 9

On how good it is for those who have left the world to flee from relatives and how they find truer friends.

OH, IF WE RELIGIOUS COULD understand the great harm that comes from having too much to do with relatives! How we would flee them! I don't know what consolation they give us (if in talking with them we leave out what pertains to God and deal only with what pertains to our comfort and rest), for we cannot enjoy their recreations, nor would this be lawful for us. Oh yes, we can grieve over their trials; in fact, we do cry over all their tribulations and sometimes more than they themselves do. Surely, if they give the body some comfort, the spirit pays well for it. You are removed from this here.

Since everything is held in common and no one can have any special comfort, the alms they give you are given in a general way; and you are freed from trying to please them on this account, for you know that it is the Lord who provides for all in common.

2. I am astonished by the harm that is caused from dealing with relatives. I don't think anyone will believe it except the one who has experienced it for himself. And how this practice of perfection seems to be forgotten nowadays in religious orders. I don't know what it is in the world that we renounce when we say that we give up everything for God if we do not give up the main thing, namely, our relatives. The situation has reached the state in which it seems to be a lack of virtue for religious not to love and talk a great deal with their relatives, and these religious are not afraid to say and even advance their reasons.

3. In this house, daughters, great care should be taken to recommend them to God; that is right. As for the rest, we should keep them out of our minds as much as possible, because it is a natural thing for the will to become attached to them more than to other persons.

I have been much loved by my relatives—according to what they have said—and I loved them so much that I didn't let them forget me. But I know through my own experience as well as that of others that in time of trial my relatives helped me least. It was the servants of God who helped me. By relatives I do not mean parents, for parents very seldom fail to help their children, and it is right for us to console them in their need. Let us not remain aloof from them if we see that communicating with them does no harm to our religious life. This communication can be carried on with detachment; and so, too, with brothers and sisters.

4. Believe, Sisters, that if you serve His Majesty as you ought, you will not find better relatives than those He sends you. I know that this is so. Convinced of that, as you are here, and understanding that in doing otherwise you would be failing your true Friend and Spouse, believe that in a very short

time you will gain this freedom. Believe that you can trust those who love you only for His sake more than you can all your relatives, and that these former will not fail you. And you will find fathers and brothers in those about whom you had not even thought. For since these seek to be repaid by God, they do things for us. Those who seek to be repaid by us soon grow tired, since they see that we are poor and unable to help them in any way. And although this may not be universally so, it is now more usually so; for, after all, the world is the world.

Do not believe whoever tells you to do something else and that it is virtue to do so. For if I should mention all the harm that this association with relatives brings in its wake, I would have to enlarge a great deal. And because others who know what they are saying better than I do have written about this, what I have said should suffice. If I who am so imperfect have understood so much about this, I wonder what those who are perfect know?

5. All that the saints counsel us about fleeing the world is clearly good. Well, believe me, our relatives are what clings to us most from the world, as I have said,¹ and the most difficult to detach ourselves from. Consequently, those who flee from their own countries do well—if it helps them, I say, for I don't think it helps to flee bodily; rather what helps is that the soul embrace the good Jesus our Lord with determination, for since in Him everything is found, in Him everything is forgotten. Yet, it is a very great help to withdraw even bodily until we have come to know this truth. For afterward it may be that the Lord will want us to have dealings with them, giving us a cross where we used to find pleasure.

Chapter 10

How it is not enough to be detached from what was mentioned if we are not detached from ourselves, and how both this virtue of detachment and humility go together.

ONCE WE HAVE DETACHED ourselves from the world and from relatives and have enclosed ourselves here under the conditions that were mentioned, it seems that we have done all there is to do and that we don't have to struggle with anything. Oh, my Sisters, do not feel secure or let yourselves go to sleep! By feeling secure you would resemble someone who very tranquilly lies down after having locked his doors for fear of thieves while allowing the thieves to remain inside the house. And you already know that there is no worse thief than we ourselves. For if you do not walk very carefully and if each Sister is not alert in going against her own will as though doing so were more important than all else, there are many things that will take away this holy freedom of spirit by which you can fly to your Maker without being held down by clay or leaden feet.

2. A great aid to going against your will is to bear in mind continually how all is vanity and how quickly everything comes to an end. This helps to remove our attachment to trivia and center it on what will never end. Even though this practice seems to be a weak means, it will strengthen the soul greatly, and the soul will be most careful in very little things. When we begin to become attached to something, we should strive to turn our thoughts from it and bring them back to God—and His Majesty helps. He has done us a great favor because in this house most of the work of detachment has been done—although this turning and being against ourselves is a difficult thing because we live very close together and love ourselves greatly.

3. Here true humility can enter the picture because this virtue and the virtue of detachment it seems to me always go together. They are two inseparable sisters. These are not the relatives I advise you to withdraw from; rather, you should em-

brace them and love them and never be seen without them. O sovereign virtues, rulers over all creation, emperors of the world, deliverers from all snares and entanglements laid by the devil, virtues so loved by our teacher Christ who never for a moment was seen without them! Whoever has them can easily go out and fight with all hell together and against the whole world and all its occasions of sin. Such a person has no fear of anyone, for his is the kingdom of heaven. He has no one to fear because he doesn't care if he loses everything, nor would he consider this a loss. The only thing he fears is displeasing his God, and he begs God to sustain him in these virtues lest they be lost through his own fault.

4. It is true that these virtues have the characteristic of so hiding themselves from the person who possesses them that he never sees them or manages to believe that he has them even though he is told he does. But he esteems them so highly that he always goes about striving to obtain them, and he gradually perfects them within himself. Yet, they are so manifest in the one who possesses them that without his desiring it, these virtues are at once recognized by others who deal with him.

But what foolishness that I should set about praising humility and mortification when they were so much praised by the King of Glory and so confirmed by His many trials. Now, my daughters, this is the work that must be done in order to escape from the land of Egypt, for in finding these virtues you will find the manna.¹ All things will taste good to you. However bad a thing may taste to those who are in the world, you will find it sweet.

5. Now, then, the first thing we must strive for is to rid ourselves of our love for our bodies, for some of us are by nature such lovers of comfort that there is no small amount of work in this area. And we are so fond of our health that it is amazing what a war our bodies cause, especially with nuns and even with those who are not. But some nuns it seems, including myself, didn't come to the monastery for any other reason than to strive not to die; each one strives for this as best she can. Here, truthfully, there is little opportunity to do this in deed, but I wouldn't want there to be even the desire. Be deter-

mined, Sisters, that you came to die for Christ, not to live comfortably for Christ. The devil suggests that you indulge yourselves so that you can keep the observance of the order; and a nun will so eagerly want to strive to care for and preserve her health for the sake of keeping the observance of the order that she dies without ever having kept this observance entirely for so much as a month, nor perhaps for even a day. Well, I don't know why we have come here!

6. Do not fear; very seldom will we lack discretion in this matter, for our confessors will at once be afraid that we may kill ourselves with penances. And the lack of such discretion is so abhorred by us that I wish we'd be so discreet in everything. I know that those who do the opposite will not care that I say this, nor do I care if they say I am judging from myself, for they would be saying the truth. I find for myself that the Lord wishes that we be sickly; at least in my case He granted me a great mercy in my being sick; for since I would have looked after my comfort anyway, He desired that there be a reason for my doing so.

Now it is amusing to see these persons and the torment they put themselves through. Sometimes they feel a desire to do penances without rhyme or reason, a desire that lasts a couple of days, so to speak; subsequently the devil makes them imagine that the penances did them harm. He makes them fear penance, and after some attempts they don't even dare carry out what the order commands.² We don't keep some of the very ordinary things of the rule, such as silence, which isn't going to do us any harm. Hardly does our head begin to ache than we stop going to choir, which won't kill us either. [We stay away one day because our head ached, another because it was just now aching, and three more so that it won't ache again.] And we seek to invent penances in our heads with the result that we can neither do the penances nor keep the observance. And at times the illness is slight, but we think we aren't obliged to do anything since we have done our duty by asking permission.

7. You will ask why the prioress gives it. If she knew what was going on inside us, perhaps she wouldn't give it. But since

you tell her about your need and there is no want of a doctor to side with you about the advisability of such permission, or a friend or relative to weep at your side, what can she do? She has a scruple that she might fail in charity. She would rather that you fail than that she herself fail. [And it doesn't seem to her right to judge badly of you. Oh, God help me, this complaining among nuns! May He forgive me, but I fear it has already become a custom. Once there was a nun who complained to me about a headache, and she complained a great deal about it. When it came time to examine her, the head didn't ache at all, but she felt an ache somewhere else.]

8. These are the things that can happen sometimes; that you might be on guard against them, I am putting them down here. For if the devil begins to frighten us about losing our health, we shall never do anything. May the Lord give us the light to be right about everything, amen.

Chapter 11

Continues to discuss mortification, and speaks about what must be acquired in sickness.

IT SEEMS TO ME AN IMPERFECTION, my Sisters, to be always complaining about light illnesses. If you can tolerate them, don't complain about them. When the sickness is serious, it does the complaining itself; this is different and the sickness is immediately obvious. Consider that you are few, and if one has this habit of complaining, it wears everyone out if you have love for one another and there is charity. If someone is truly sick, she should say so and take the necessary remedy. If you have lost self-love, you will feel any self-indulgence so keenly that there is no fear you will take anything without necessity or complain needlessly. If there is some need, it would be worse not to say anything than to seek your comfort without being sick, and it would be very wrong if the others did not feel compassion for you.

2. Moreover, where there's charity, and so few nuns, con-

cern about your getting well will surely never be lacking. But with regard to some of the weaknesses and little illnesses of women, forget about complaining of them, for sometimes the devil makes us imagine these pains. They are things that come and go. If you do not lose the habit of speaking and complaining about everything—unless you do so to God—you will never finish your lamenting. [I insist so much on this because I think it's very important and a reason why monasteries have mitigated their observance.] A fault this body has is that the more comfort we try to give it the more needs it discovers. It's amazing how much comfort it wants; and since in the case of health the need presents itself under the color of some good, however small it may be, the poor soul is deceived and doesn't grow.

3. Remember how many sick people there are who are poor and have no one to complain to; now it is nonsense to think one can be poor and live in comfort. Recall as well many women who are married. I know of some who are persons of high station and who have serious illnesses and heavy trials but for fear of annoying their husbands dare not complain. Well, sinner that I am! Indeed, we have not come here to receive more comfort than they! Oh, you who are free from the great trials of the world, learn how to suffer a little for love of God without having everyone know about it! If a woman in an unhappy marriage suffers much adversity without being able to receive comfort from anyone lest her husband know that she speaks and complains about it, shouldn't we suffer just between ourselves and God some of the illnesses He gives us because of our sins? And even more so because by our complaining the sickness is not alleviated.

4. In all this that I have said I am not dealing with serious illnesses, when there is great fever—although I beg for moderation and always patience—but of little ailments, that one can bear on one's feet. But what would happen if this that I'm writing were seen outside the house? What would all the nuns say about me? How willingly I would suffer their talk if someone were to make amends! For if there is but one nun like this, the situation can reach a point that for the most part no one is

believed no matter how serious her sickness may be. Let us remember our holy fathers of the past, those hermits whose lives we aim to imitate. What sufferings they endured! What solitude, cold, and hunger, and what sun and heat, without anyone to complain to but God! Do you think they were made of steel? Well, they were as delicate as we. And believe, daughters, that when we begin to conquer these wretched little bodies, we will not be so troubled by them. There will be enough Sisters to look after what is necessary; forget about yourselves except in what concerns a definite need. If we do not determine once and for all to swallow death and the lack of health, we will never do anything. Strive not to fear them; abandon yourselves totally to God, come what may. So what if we die? If our body has mocked us so often, shouldn't we mock it at least once?

5. And believe that this determination is more important than we can realize. For little by little as we grow accustomed to this attitude we shall, with the Lord's help, remain lords of our bodies. Now, then, conquering such an enemy is a very important means to enduring the battle of this life. May the Lord conquer him as He alone can. I truly believe that the benefits coming from this practice are not known except by one who already enjoys the victory. They are so great, from what I believe, that no one would feel he was undergoing trial if he could remain in this calm and dominion.

Chapter 12

How the true lover of God will have little regard for his own life and honor.

LET US GO ON to other things that are also quite important, although they may seem small. Everything seems to be a heavy burden, and rightly so, because it involves a war against ourselves. But once we begin to work, God does so much in the soul and grants it so many favors that all that one can do in this life seems little. And as nuns we do the most we

can; that is, we give up our freedom for the love of God, placing it in the power of another, and undergo so many trials and fasts, so much silence, enclosure, and service in choir that however much we may want to please ourselves we can only seldom do so. And in many of the monasteries that I have seen, perhaps I am the only one who pleases herself. Why should we, then, delay in practicing interior mortification? For interior mortification makes everything else more meritorious and perfect, and afterward enables us to do the other things with greater ease and repose. This interior mortification is acquired, as I have said,¹ by proceeding gradually, not giving in to our own will and appetites, even in little things, until the body is completely surrendered to the spirit.

2. I repeat² that the whole matter, or a great part of it, lies in losing concern about ourselves and our own satisfaction. The least that any of us who has truly begun to serve the Lord can offer Him is our own life. Since we have given the Lord our will, what do we fear? It is clear that if someone is a true religious or a true person of prayer and aims to enjoy the delights of God, he must not turn his back upon the desire to die for God and suffer martyrdom. For don't you know yet, Sisters, that the life of a good religious who desires to be one of God's close friends is a long martyrdom? A long martyrdom because in comparison with the martyrdom of those who are quickly beheaded, it can be called long; but all life is short, and the life of some extremely short. And how do we know if ours won't be so short that at the very hour or moment we determine to serve God completely it will come to an end? This is possible. In sum, there is no reason to give importance to anything that will come to an end. And who will not work hard if he thinks that each hour is the last? Well, believe me, thinking this is the safest course.

3. So, let us try hard to go against our own will in everything. For if you are careful, as I said,³ you will gradually, without knowing how, find yourselves at the summit. But how extremely rigorous, it seems, to say that we shouldn't please ourselves in anything when we do not also mention the pleasure and delight this going against our will carries in its wake and

what is gained by it even in this life. What security! Since all of you practice this denial here, the most is done; for you awaken and help one another. This is the practice in which each one should strive to be ahead of the others.

4. Take careful note of interior stirrings, especially if they have to do with privileges of rank. God, by His Passion, deliver us from dwelling on such words or thoughts as, “I have seniority,” “I am older,” “I have done more work,” “the other is treated better than I.” If such thoughts come they should be quickly cut off. If you dwell on them or begin to speak about them, the result is a pestilence from which great evils arise [in monasteries. Be careful, for I know a great deal about it!] If you should have a prioress who consents to this kind of thing, however small, believe that God has permitted, on account of your sins, that you have her as prioress so that you will begin to go astray; and pray hard that He will provide a remedy because you are in great danger.

5. Perhaps you will say: “Why should I give so much importance to this detachment and be so rigorous about it, for God gives consolations to those who are not so detached?” I believe He does do this, for in His infinite wisdom He sees that this is fitting so as to draw them to give up everything for Him. I do not call “giving up everything” entering religious life, for there can be impediments to entering religious life, and the perfect soul can be detached and humble anywhere; although this latter may involve greater trial, for being in a monastery is a big help. But believe me in one thing: if there is any vain esteem of honor or wealth (and this can be had inside monasteries as well as outside, although inside the occasions for it are more removed and the fault would be greater), you will never grow very much or come to enjoy the true fruit of prayer. And this is so even though you may have many years of experience in prayer—or, better, I should say reflection because perfect prayer in the end removes these bad habits.

6. Consider, Sisters, whether any of these things pertain to you; you are here for no other purpose. It will be due to your vain esteem of honor that you will not be honored. Moreover,

you will lose the benefit you could have otherwise gained; thus dishonor and loss will be joined together here.

Let each one consider how much humility she has, and she will see what progress has been made. It doesn't seem to me the devil will tempt the truly humble person about rank even with the first stirrings. Since he is so shrewd, he fears getting hurt. It is impossible for a person who is humble not to gain strength and progress in humility when the devil tempts him in this way. Clearly, a humble person will reflect on his life and consider how he has served the Lord in comparison with how the Lord ought to be served and the wonders the Lord performed in lowering Himself so as to give us an example of humility; and he will consider his sins and where he merited to be on account of them. The soul ends up with so much gain that the devil doesn't dare return another day lest he get his head crushed.

7. Take this advice from me and do not forget it; do not strive only in an interior way—for it would be a very great loss if we didn't derive some benefit from these acts of humility—but strive also in an exterior way that the Sisters draw some benefit from your temptation. If you wish to take revenge on the devil and free yourself more quickly from temptation, ask the prioress as soon as the temptation comes to give you orders to do some lowly task; or, if possible, do it on your own and go about studying how to double your willingness to do things that go contrary to your nature. The Lord will reveal these things to you, and in this way and as a result the temptation will last only a short while.⁴ God deliver us from persons who are concerned about honor while trying to serve Him. Consider it an evil gain, and, as I said,⁵ honor is itself lost by desiring it, especially in matters of rank. For there is no toxin in the world that kills perfection as do these things.

8. You will say that these are natural little things to which we need pay no attention. Don't fool yourselves, they increase like foam, and there is nothing so small in which there is so obvious a danger as this concern about honor and whether we have been offended. Do you know why—besides many other reasons? Perhaps this concern begins in someone as something small and amounting to hardly anything, and then the devil

stirs another to think it is something big, and this other will even think she is practicing charity by going and saying to the offended nun, "How do you put up with such an offense? God give you patience to offer it up; a saint wouldn't suffer more." The devil puts such malicious talk on the other Sister's tongue that though you barely overcome the offense, you are still tempted to vainglory, when in reality you did not suffer with the perfection with which you should have suffered.

9. And this nature of ours is so weak that merely by telling ourselves that the offense should not be tolerated, we think and believe that we have done something; how much more is this so when we see that others feel this way for us. As a result, the soul loses the occasions it had for meriting; it becomes weaker and opens the door for the devil to come again with something worse. And it could even happen, when you want to suffer the injury, that they will come to you and say: "Are you a beast or what? It's good for you to feel things." [Huh, and if one of them is a friend!] Oh, for love of God, my Sisters! May no one be moved by an indiscreet charity to show pity for another in something that touches upon these false injuries, for such pity is like that of Job's wife and friends.⁶

Chapter 13

Continues to discuss mortification and how one must flee from the world's maxims and rules about honor in order to arrive at true wisdom.

IHAVE OFTEN TOLD YOU, Sisters, and now I want to leave it in writing here so that you will not forget it, that in this house – and even in the case of any person seeking perfection – you should run a thousand miles from such expressions as: "I was right." "They had no reason for doing this to me." "The one who did this to me was wrong." God deliver us from this poor way of reasoning. Does it seem to have been right that our good Jesus suffered so many insults and was made to undergo so much injustice? I don't know why the nun who

doesn't want to carry the cross, except the one that seems to her reasonable, is in the monastery. Let her return to the world, although even there they will not respect such reasonings. Could you by chance suffer as much as you deserve? What kind of reasoning is this? I certainly don't understand it.

2. Let us reason in such a way when some honor is paid to us, or when we are given some comfort or receive good treatment; for certainly it isn't right that we be so treated in this life. When wrongs are done—that's what they call them without there being any wrong done to us—I don't know what there is to talk about. Either we are brides of so great a King or we are not. If we are, what honorable woman is there who does not share in the dishonors done to her spouse even though she does not will them? In fact, both spouses share the honor and the dishonor. Now, then, to enjoy a part in His kingdom and want no part in His dishonors and trials is nonsense.

3. May God not allow us to refuse the latter; but the nun to whom it seems she is herself least of all should consider herself the most blessed of all. And she indeed is. If she bears dishonor as it must be borne, she will not be without honor either in this life or in the next. Believe me in this. But what nonsense I have spoken—that you believe me, when it has been said by true Wisdom, [who is Truth itself, and by the Queen of the angels.¹ Let us, at least, imitate His humility in some way. I say "in some way," for however much we might lower and humble ourselves, someone like myself does nothing; for because of her sins she has merited that the devils humiliate and despise her, even though she wouldn't like their doing so. For even if you may not have so many sins, seldom is there anyone who hasn't done something by which he has merited hell.]

Let us, my daughters, imitate in some way the great humility of the Blessed Virgin, whose habit we wear, for it is embarrassing to call ourselves her nuns. However much it seems to us that we humble ourselves, we fall far short of being the daughters of such a Mother and the brides of such a Spouse.

Thus, if you do not diligently put a stop to the things mentioned, what today seems to be nothing will tomorrow perhaps be a venial sin; and it is so dangerous that if you are careless

about it you will suffer its ill effects, for it is something very bad for religious communities.

4. We who live in community should be very careful about it so as not to harm those who work to do good for us and give us good example. And if we could understand what great harm is done when a bad custom is begun, we would rather die than be the cause of it. For such a death would be a bodily one, but the loss of souls is a great loss, and it doesn't seem there is any end to the loss. Once some are dead, others follow after; and all, perhaps, are hurt more from a bad custom we have started than from many virtues. For the devil does not allow the bad custom to cease, but natural weakness causes the virtues to be lost.

5. Oh, what a great act of charity and what a great service to God a nun would perform if when she sees she cannot follow the customs of this house she would recognize the fact and leave! And she ought to do so if she doesn't want to go through a hell here on earth; and, please God, there won't be another in the next life,² for there are many reasons to fear such perdition, and perhaps neither she nor the others will understand this as I do.

6. Believe me in this matter; and if you don't, time will be my witness. For the style of life we aim to follow is not just that of nuns but of hermits, and thus you detach yourselves from every creature. I see the Lord gives this favor of detachment in a special way to the one He has chosen for this life. Even though the detachment may not be entirely perfect from the beginning, it is seen that she is advancing toward it by the great contentment and happiness she finds in not having to deal again with anything of the world and by how she relishes everything about the religious life.

I repeat that if she is inclined to the things of the world and not seen to be making progress that she should leave. If she still desires to be a nun, let her go to another monastery; and if she doesn't she will see what will happen to her. Don't let her complain about me, who started this way of life, for not having warned her.

7. This house is a heaven, if one can be had on this earth. Here we have a very happy life if one is pleased only with pleas-

ing God and pays no attention to her own satisfaction. If a nun desires something in addition to pleasing God, all will be lost because that something cannot be had. The discontented nun is like someone who feels great loathing for food; however good the food may be, it nauseates him, and the food that healthy people find great pleasure in eating is repugnant to such a person. This nun will be saved better elsewhere, and it may be that little by little she will reach the perfection that here she couldn't endure because she had to undertake it all at once. For although interiorly it takes time to become totally detached and mortified, exteriorly it must be done immediately. I fear that any nun who walks in such good company and sees that all the other nuns are detached but does not herself make progress in a year will not make more progress in many years, but less. I don't say that the detachment need be as complete as it is with the other nuns, but that you recognize that health is returning; for when the sickness is mortal, the fact becomes immediately obvious.

Chapter 14

The importance of not allowing anyone to make profession whose spirit goes contrary to the things mentioned.

I TRULY BELIEVE that the Lord highly favors the one who has real determination. Thus, the intention of the new member should be considered, lest she merely be looking for a secure future, as will be the case with many,¹ although the Lord can bring this intention to perfection if she has good intelligence; but if she doesn't, in no way should she be accepted, for neither will she understand why she is entering, nor afterward will she understand those who desire to lead her along the best spiritual path. For the most part those who have this fault always think they know more about what suits them than do those who are wiser. And the fault is an evil I consider in-

curable, for it would be a wonder if those having this fault ever gave up their malice. Where there are many nuns this fault could be tolerated, but where there are so few it shouldn't be allowed.

2. When a nun with good intelligence begins to grow attached to good, she takes hold of it with fortitude because she sees that doing so is most appropriate. And if her intelligence doesn't help her to attain a high degree of spirituality, it will be useful for giving good counsel and for many other services without being a bother to anyone. If this good intelligence is lacking, I don't know how she can be of any use to the community, and she could be the cause of much harm.

This lack of intelligence is not so quickly noticed. For many speak well but understand poorly; others speak little and without polish but they have the intelligence for a great deal of good. In fact, there is a holy simplicity that knows little about the affairs and style of the world but a lot about dealing with God. Hence much information is necessary before accepting new members and a long probation before admitting them to profession. Let the world understand once and for all that you have the freedom to dismiss the new members and that in a monastery where austerities are practiced, there are many occasions for doing so. And when decisions of this sort become the custom, no one will take the dismissal as an affront.

3. I say this because we are living in such miserable times and our nature is so weak that we don't want to offend relatives, and so it is not enough that we have a command from our forefathers to stop paying attention to what people nowadays take for honor. May it please God that we do not pay in the next life for the new members we admit in this life; there is never lacking a pretext for convincing ourselves that we can't do otherwise. [And in a matter so important no pretext is good, for when the bishop without attachment or passion looks after the good of the house, I don't think God will ever let him be mistaken. And I do believe that there will always be some mistake made if he is affected by such pity and foolish ideas about one's honor.]

4. And this is a matter that each one should consider, recommend to God, and encourage the prioress about, for it's something so important. Thus, I beg God to give you light. You are very fortunate that you do not receive dowries, for it can happen that in monasteries where they are accepted the nuns, so as to avoid giving back the money—which they no longer have—leave the thief in the house who steals the treasure from them; which is a great pity. In this matter you shouldn't take pity on anyone, for you would be doing harm to the person you are trying to help.

Chapter 15

The great good that lies in not excusing oneself even when blamed without fault.

[BUT WHAT DISORDER IN THE WAY I write! Really, it's as though the work were done by one who doesn't know what she's doing. The fault is yours, Sisters, because you are the ones who ordered me to write this. Read it as best you can, for I am writing it as best I can. And if you find that it is all wrong, burn it. Time is necessary to do the work well, and I have so little as you see, for eight days must have gone by in which I haven't written anything. So I forget what I have said and also what I was going to say. Now it is wrong for me to ask you to avoid doing what I have just finished doing, that is, making excuses. For I see that not making excuses for oneself is a habit characteristic of high perfection, and very meritorious; it gives great edification. And although I have often taught it to you, and by God's goodness you practice it, His Majesty has never given it to me.]

I am very embarrassed about what I am going to try to persuade you of, for I should have practiced at least something of what I am about to tell you concerning this virtue. The fact is, I confess, that I have made very little progress. It always seems to me there is some reason for my thinking it is greater virtue to

make an excuse for myself. Since at times it is lawful to give an excuse and it would be wrong not to do so, I don't have the discretion or, to put it better, humility to do so when fitting. Indeed, it calls for great humility to be silent at seeing oneself condemned without fault. This is a wonderful way to imitate the Lord who took away all our faults. So, I ask you to take great care about this practice; it brings with it great benefits. I see no reason at all for us to try to excuse ourselves, unless, as I say, in some cases where not telling the truth would cause anger or scandal. When to excuse oneself will be recognized by those who have more discretion than I.

2. I believe it's very advantageous to get in the habit of practicing this virtue, or to strive to attain from the Lord the true humility that comes from it. The truly humble person must in fact desire to be held in little esteem, persecuted, and condemned without fault even in serious matters. If she desires to imitate the Lord, in what better way can she do so? For here there is no need of bodily strength or help from anyone but God.

3. I should like us, my Sisters, to strive very much for these great virtues; and let us do this penance, for you already know that I am rather strict when there is question of your doing too many penances. They can do harm to one's health if done without discretion. In this practice there is nothing to fear. However great the interior virtues may be, they do not take away the bodily strength necessary to keep the religious observance; on the contrary, they strengthen the soul. And from very little things, as I have said at other times,¹ one can gain the light so as to come out the victor in great things. [But how easily one writes of this and how poorly I practice it!] Indeed, in these great things I have not been able to test this myself, for I have never heard anything evil said of me that I didn't see that it fell short; for even though I had not failed in the things they accused me of, I have offended God in many other areas, and it seemed to me they were being quite kind by not mentioning these other offenses. I am always happier that they speak about what is not true of me than the truth.²

4. It is a great help to reflect upon the many things that are

gained through all the various ways and how—if we observe carefully—we are never, never blamed without there being faults on our part, for we always go about full of them since the just man falls seven times a day, and it would be a lie to say we have no sin.³ Thus even though we are blamed for faults we haven't committed, we are never entirely without fault, as was the good Jesus.

5. O my Lord, when I think of the many ways You suffered and how You deserved none of these sufferings, I don't know what to say about myself, nor do I know where my common sense was when I didn't want to suffer, nor where I am when I excuse myself. You already know, my Good, that if I have some good it is a gift from no one else's hands but Yours. Now, Lord, what costs You more, to give much or little? If it is true that I have not merited this good, neither have I merited the favors You have granted me. Is it possible that I have wanted anyone to feel good about a thing as bad as I after so many evil things have been said about You who are the Good above all goods? Don't allow, don't allow, my God—nor would I ever want You to allow—that there be anything in Your servant that is displeasing in Your eyes. Observe, Lord, that mine are blind and satisfied with very little. Give me light and grant that I may truly desire to be abhorred by all since I have so often failed You who have loved me so faithfully.

6. What is this, my God? What do we expect to obtain from pleasing creatures? What does it matter if we are blamed a lot by all of them if in Your presence we are without fault? O my Sisters, we never completely understand this virtue; so, we are never completely perfect if we do not reflect and think a great deal upon what is and what is not. For when you have no other gain than the embarrassment of the person who after having blamed you sees that you are in fact without fault and yet allow yourself to be condemned, that gain is extremely great. At times something like this elevates a soul more than ten sermons. We must all try to be preachers through our deeds since the Apostle⁴ and our incapacity prevent us from being preachers through our words.

7. However enclosed you are, never think that the good or

evil you do will remain a secret. And do you think, daughters, that when you do not excuse yourselves there will be lacking someone to defend you? Observe how the Lord answered for the Magdalene both in the house of the Pharisee and when her sister accused her.⁵ He will not be as harsh with you as He was with Himself, for at the time that one of the thieves defended Him, He was on the cross.⁶ So His Majesty will inspire someone to defend you; and when He doesn't, the defense won't be necessary. I have seen this, and it is true. But I wouldn't want you to be thinking about being defended, but that you rejoice in being blamed; and time will be the witness to the benefit you will see in your soul. For one begins to obtain freedom and doesn't care whether they say good or evil of him but rather thinks of what is said as though it were another's affair. The situation is like that in which we have two persons talking together but not to us; we then don't care about answering. So it is here; with the habit that has been acquired of not responding, it doesn't seem they are speaking to us.

This will seem impossible to those of us who are very sensitive and little mortified. In the beginning it is difficult; but I know that such freedom, self-denial, and detachment from ourselves can, with God's help, be attained.

Chapter 16

The difference that must lie between the perfection of the life of contemplatives and that of those who are simply content with the practice of mental prayer. How it is possible that God may at times raise a distracted soul to perfect contemplation and the reason for His doing so. This chapter and the following one are very noteworthy.¹

[DON'T THINK THAT WHAT I HAVE SAID so far is all I have to say, for I am just setting up the game, as they say. You asked me to mention something about the foundation for prayer. Even though God did not lead me by means of this foundation, for I still don't have these virtues,² I know of no

other. Now realize that anyone who doesn't know how to set up the pieces for a game of chess won't know how to play well. And if he doesn't know how to check his opponent's king, he won't know how to checkmate it either. Well, you will reprimand me because I am speaking about a game we do not have in this house, nor should we have it. Here you see the kind of Mother God has given you, that she even knows about this vanity; although they say that sometimes the game is permissible. And oh, how permissible this kind of game will be for us; and how quickly, if we play it often, will we checkmate this divine King, who will not be able to escape, nor will He want to.

2. The queen is the piece that can carry on the best battle in this game, and all the other pieces help. There's no queen like humility for making the King surrender. Humility drew the King from heaven to the womb of the Virgin, and with it, by one hair,³ we will draw Him to our souls. And realize that the one who has more humility will be the one who possesses Him more; and the one who has less will possess Him less. For I cannot understand how there could be humility without love or love without humility; nor are these two virtues possible without detachment from all creatures.

3. You will ask me, daughters, why I am speaking to you about virtues when you have enough books to teach you about them, and you will say that you want to hear only about contemplation. I say that had you asked about meditation I could have spoken about it and counseled all to practice it even though they do not possess the virtues, for meditation is the basis for acquiring all the virtues, and to undertake it is a matter of life and death for all Christians. And no one, however lost he may be, should set it aside if God has awakened him to so great a good, as I have already written elsewhere⁴ and as have many others who know what they are writing about; for I certainly don't know what I'm writing about — God knows.

4. But contemplation is something else, daughters. This is the mistake we all make, that if a person spends a little time each day thinking about his sins — for he is obliged to do that if

he is a Christian more than in name — they immediately say he is a very contemplative soul and they want him to possess at once virtues as great as those a very contemplative soul is obliged to have; and even the person himself wants this, but is mistaken. In the beginning he didn't know how to set up the game. He thought it was enough to know the pieces in order to checkmate the King. But that was impossible, for this King doesn't give Himself but to those who give themselves entirely to Him.]

5. Therefore, daughters, if you desire that I tell you about the way that leads to contemplation, you will have to bear with me if I enlarge a little on some other matters even though they may not seem to you so important; for in my opinion they are. And if you don't want to hear about them or put them into practice, stay with your mental prayer for your whole life, for I assure you and all persons who aim after true contemplation (though I could be mistaken since I am judging by myself for whom it took twenty years) that you will not thereby reach it.

6. I now want to explain — because some of you don't know — what mental prayer is, and please God we shall practice this as it ought to be practiced. But I fear that mental prayer also involves much labor if the virtues are not obtained — although it's not necessary that they be possessed in as high a degree as is required for contemplation. I say that the King of glory will not come to our soul — I mean to be united with it — if we do not make the effort to gain the great virtues. I want to explain this because if you should catch me saying something that isn't true you wouldn't believe anything, and you would be right if I did so knowingly; but God forbid! If I should say something that isn't true, it would be a matter of my not knowing more or not understanding. I want to say, then, that there are times when God will want to grant some great favor to persons who are in a bad state so as to draw them by this means out of the hands of the devil.⁵

7. O my Lord, how often do we make You fight the devil in arm to arm combat! Isn't it enough that You allowed him to take You in his arms when he carried You to the pinnacle of

the temple⁶ so that You might teach us how to conquer him? But what would it be like, daughters, to see him, with his darknesses, next to the Sun. And what fear that unfortunate one must have borne without knowing why, for God didn't allow him to understand it.⁷ Blessed be such compassion and mercy. What shame we Christians ought to have for making Him wrestle arm to arm, as I have said, with so foul a beast. It was truly necessary, Lord, that you have such strong arms. But how is it that they didn't weaken by the many torments You suffered on the cross? Oh, how everything that is suffered with love is healed again! And so I believe that had You survived, the very love You have for us would have healed Your wounds, for no other medicine was necessary. [It seems I am speaking nonsense, but I'm not; for divine love can do greater things than these. But to avoid seeming strange—which I really am—and so as not to give you bad example, I'll say no more.] O my God, grant that I might put medicine like this in everything that causes me pain and trial! How eagerly I would desire these if I could be sure that I'd be healed with so soothing a balm!

8. To return to what I was saying,⁸ there are souls that God thinks He can win to Himself by these means. Since He sees they are completely lost, His Majesty desires that nothing be wanting on His part. And even though they are in a bad state and lacking in virtue, He gives them spiritual delight, consolation, and tenderness that begin to stir the desires. And He even places them in contemplation sometimes, though He does so rarely and it lasts only a short while. He does this, as I say, so as to try them to see if with that favor they will want to prepare themselves to enjoy Him often. But if they don't prepare themselves—pardon me; or better, may You pardon us, Lord, for it is a great evil when after You bring a soul like this to Yourself it approaches and becomes attached to some earthly thing.

9. For myself I hold that there are many to whom our Lord God gives this test, but few who prepare themselves for the enjoyment of the favor of contemplation. When the Lord grants it and we do not fail on our part, I hold as certain that He

never ceases to give until we reach a very high degree. When we do not give ourselves to His Majesty with the determination with which He gives Himself to us, He does a good deal by leaving us in mental prayer and visiting us from time to time like servants in His vineyard.⁹ But these others are favored children. He would not want them to leave His side, nor does He leave them, for they no longer want to leave Him. He seats them at His table, He shares with them His food even to the point of taking a portion from His own mouth to give them.

10. Oh, blessed care, my daughters! Oh, blessed renunciation of things so small and so base that reaches so high a state. What would it matter, when you are in the arms of God, if the whole world blamed you! He has the power to free you from everything, for once He commanded that the world be made, it was made; His will is the deed. Now do not fear that He will allow others to speak against you except for the benefit of those He loves. His love for those who love Him is not so small. Well why, my Sisters, shouldn't we show our love for Him as much as we can? Behold it is a beautiful exchange to give our love for His. Consider that He can do all things, and we can't do anything here below but what He enables us to do. Well, what is this that we do for You, Lord, our Maker? It amounts to almost nothing, just a little determination. Well, if from that which is nothing His Majesty desires us to merit everything, let's not be foolish.

11. O Lord, how true that all harm comes to us from not keeping our eyes fixed on You; if we were to look at nothing else but the way, we would soon arrive. But we meet with a thousand falls and obstacles and lose the way because we don't keep our eyes—as I say—on the true way. It seems so new to us that you would think we had never walked on it. It's certainly something to excite pity, that which sometimes happens. [I say that it doesn't seem we are Christians or that we ever in our lives read the Passion. God help me, if I neglect a little rule concerning someone's honor! If anyone tells you not to worry about your honor, he at once seems to be unchristian. I laughed to myself—or rather was distressed—at what I sometimes saw in the world and even, because of my sins, in religious com-

munities.] For any slight loss in one's honor is not tolerated, nor does it seem that such a loss should be tolerated. They immediately say: "We're not saints."

12. God deliver us, Sisters, when we do something imperfect, from saying: "We're not angels, we're not saints." Consider that even though we're not, it is a great good to think that if we try we can become saints with God's help. And have no fear that He will fail if we don't fail. Since we have not come here for any other thing, let us put our hands to the task, as they say. May we presume to use everything we learn about greater service of the Lord in His favor. The presumption I would like to see present in this house, for it always makes humility grow, is to have a holy daring; for God helps the strong and He shows no partiality.¹⁰

13. I have digressed a good deal. I want to return to what I was saying,¹¹ that is, explaining the nature of mental prayer and of contemplation. It may seem impertinent for me to be doing that, but for you everything is acceptable. It may be that you will understand the matter better through my rough style than through other more elegant styles. May the Lord help me, amen.

Chapter 17

Not all souls are suited for contemplation, and some reach it late. The truly humble person must be content with the path along which God leads him.

IT SEEMS I AM ALREADY DEALING with prayer. But something still remains to be said that is very important because it pertains to humility and is necessary in this house¹ where the main occupation is prayer. And, as I have said,² it is only right that you should try to understand how to train yourselves a great deal in humility. In fact, this is an important aspect of prayer and indispensable for all persons who practice it. How could a truly humble person think he is as good as

those who are contemplatives? Yes, it is true, God can make you a contemplative—through His goodness and mercy; but, in my opinion, one should always take the lowest place, for this is what the Lord told us to do³ and taught us in deed. Prepare yourself so that God may lead you along this path if He so desires. When He doesn't, you can practice humility, which is to consider yourself lucky to serve the servants of the Lord and praise His Majesty because He brought you among them and drew you away from the devils in hell where you deserved to be a slave of these devils.

2. I don't say this without serious cause, because, as I have said,⁴ it is important to understand that God doesn't lead all by one path, and perhaps the one who thinks she is walking along a very lowly path is in fact higher in the eyes of the Lord.

So, not because all in this house practice prayer must all be contemplatives; that's impossible. And it would be very distressing for the one who isn't a contemplative if she didn't understand the truth that to be a contemplative is a gift from God; and since being one isn't necessary for salvation, nor does God demand this, she shouldn't think anyone will demand it of her. So, you will not fail to be very perfect if you do what has been mentioned. Indeed, it could be that a Sister will gain much more merit because she must work harder and the Lord leads her as one who is strong, saving for her what she doesn't enjoy here below so as to give it to her all at once. Not for this reason should she grow fainthearted or give up prayer or what all the other Sisters are doing, for sometimes the Lord comes very late and pays just as well, and all at once, what He was giving to others in the course of many years.

3. I spent fourteen years never being able to practice meditation without reading. There will be many persons of this sort, and others who will be unable to meditate even with the reading but able only to pray vocally, and in this vocal prayer they will spend most of their time. There are minds so active they cannot dwell on one thing but are always restless, and to such an extreme that if they want to pause to think of God, a thousand absurdities, scruples, and doubts come to mind.

I know an elderly person who lives a good life, is penitential

and an excellent servant of God, who has spent many hours for many years in vocal prayer, but in mental prayer she's helpless; the most she can do is go slowly in reciting the vocal prayers.⁵ There are a number of other persons of this kind. If humility is present, I don't believe they will be any the worse off in the end but will be very much the equals of those who receive many delights; and in a way they will be more secure, for we do not know if the delights are from God or from the devil. Now if the delights are not from God, there is greater danger because the work of the devil here is to instigate pride. But if they are from God, there is nothing to fear; they bring with them humility, as I have written very much at length in another book.⁶

4. Those who do not receive these delights walk with humility, suspecting that this lack is their own fault, always concerned about making progress. They don't see anyone shed a tear without thinking that if they themselves don't shed any they are very far behind in the service of God. And perhaps they are much more advanced, for tears, even though they be good, are not all perfect. In humility, mortification, detachment, and the other virtues there is always greater security. There is nothing to fear; don't be afraid that you will fail to reach the perfection of those who are very contemplative.

5. St. Martha was a saint, even though they do not say she was contemplative. Well now, what more do you want than to be able to resemble this blessed woman who merited so often to have Christ our Lord in her home, give Him food, serve Him, and eat at table with Him [and even from His plate]?⁷ If she had been enraptured like the Magdalene, there wouldn't have been anyone to give food to the divine Guest. Well, think of this congregation as the home of St. Martha and that there must be people for every task. And those who are led by the active life shouldn't complain about those who are very much absorbed in contemplation, for these active ones know that the Lord will defend the contemplatives, even though these latter are silent⁸ since for the most part contemplation makes one forgetful of self and of all things.

6. Let them recall that it is necessary for someone to prepare His meal and let them consider themselves lucky to serve with

Martha. Let them consider how true humility consists very much in great readiness to be content with whatever the Lord may want to do with them and in always finding oneself unworthy to be called His servant. If contemplating, practicing mental and vocal prayer, taking care of the sick, helping with household chores, and working even at the lowliest tasks are all ways of serving the Guest who comes to be with us and eat and recreate, what difference does it make whether we serve in the one way or the other?

7. I don't say that we shouldn't try; on the contrary, we should try everything. What I am saying is that this is not a matter of your choosing but of the Lord's. If after many years He should give to each a certain task, it would be a nice kind of humility for you to want to choose for yourselves. Leave it up to the Lord of the house; He is wise, He is mighty, He understands what is suitable for you and what is suitable for Him as well. Be sure that if you do what lies in your power, preparing yourselves for contemplation with the perfection mentioned, and that if He doesn't give it to you (and I believe He will give it if detachment and humility are truly present), He will save this gift for you so as to grant it to you all at once in heaven. And, as I have said before,⁹ He wants to lead you as though you were strong, giving you the cross here below, something that His Majesty always had. What better friendship than that He desire for you what He desired for Himself? And it could be that you would not have received so great an award in contemplation. The judgments are His, there's no reason for us to become involved in them. It is good that the choice is not up to us, for then—since contemplation seems a more restful path—we would all be great contemplatives.

O wonderful gain, not to want to gain from following our own judgment lest we suffer any loss! God, in fact, never permits any loss to come to a person truly mortified save for a greater gain.

Chapter 18

Continues on the same subject and tells how the trials of contemplatives are much greater than those of persons living an active life. This chapter is very consoling for these latter.

NOW, DAUGHTERS, I TELL THOSE OF YOU whom God does not lead by this path that from what I have seen and understood concerning the lives of those who do walk along it, contemplatives do not bear a lighter cross; and you would be surprised at the ways and modes in which God gives them crosses. I know both paths, and I know clearly that the trials God gives to contemplatives are intolerable. These trials are of such a kind that if He didn't give that food with its delights, these persons wouldn't be able to endure the trials. And it is clear that since God wants to lead those whom He greatly loves by the path of tribulation—and the more He loves them the greater the tribulation—there is no reason to think that He despises contemplatives, for with His own mouth He praises them and considers them His friends.¹

2. Well, to think that He admits into His intimate friendship people who live in comfort and without trials is foolish. I am very certain that God gives contemplatives much greater trials. Thus, since He leads them along a rough and uneven path and at times they think they are lost and must return to begin again, His Majesty needs to give them sustenance, and not water but wine so that in their inebriation they will not understand what they are suffering and will be able to endure it. So, I see few true contemplatives who are not courageous and determined to suffer, for the first thing the Lord does, if they are weak, is to give them courage and make them unafraid of trials.

3. I believe that when those of the active life see the contemplative favored a little, they think there is nothing else to the contemplative's life than receiving favors. Well, I say that perhaps these active persons couldn't endure one day of the kind the contemplative endures. Thus, since the Lord knows

what each one is suited for, He gives to each person a proper task, one that He sees as appropriate for that person's soul, for the service of the Lord Himself and for the good of neighbor. And if you have done what you can to be prepared, do not fear that your effort will be lost. Keep in mind that I say we should all try to be contemplatives, since we are not here for any other reason. And we should try not for just a year, nor for only two, nor even for just ten; otherwise we leave the impression that we are giving up as cowards; and it is good for the Lord to know we are doing our best. We must be like soldiers who even though they may not have served a great deal must always be ready for any duty the captain commands them to undertake, since it is he who gives them their salary. And how much better the pay our King gives than the pay of earthly kings.²

4. Since the captain sees his soldiers present and eager to serve and has understood the capability of each one, he distributes the duties according to the strengths he sees. And if these soldiers were not present, he wouldn't give them anything, nor would he command them to serve.

So it is with us, Sisters; let us give ourselves to mental prayer. And let whoever cannot practice it turn to vocal prayer, reading, and colloquy with God, as I shall say afterward.³ Do not abandon the hours of prayer we have in common;⁴ you don't know when the Spouse⁵ will call—let not what happened to the foolish virgins happen to you.⁶ He may want to give more work, disguised in delight. If He doesn't, you should understand that this delight is not meant for you, that it is fitting for you to go without it. And here is where meriting through humility enters; one truly believes that he isn't even capable of doing the little he does.

5. You should be happy to serve in what they command you to do, as I have said.⁷ And if this humility is true, blessed be such a servant in the active life, for she will not complain but of herself. [I would much rather be like her than like some contemplatives.] Let the others fight their own war, which is not small. Even though the standard-bearer doesn't fight in the battle, he doesn't for that reason fail to walk in great danger; and interiorly he must do more work than anyone. Since he

carries the flag, he cannot defend himself; and even though they cut him to pieces he must not let it out of his hands. So it is with contemplatives: they must keep the flag of humility raised and suffer all the blows they receive without returning any. Their duty is to suffer as Christ did, to hold high the cross, not to let it out of their hand whatever the dangers they see themselves in, nor let any weakness in suffering be seen in them; for this reason they are given so honorable an office. The contemplative must be careful about what he is doing, for if he lets go of the flag the battle will be lost. Thus, I believe that great harm is done to those who are not so advanced when they see that the deeds of those they consider to be captains already and friends of God are not in conformity with this office.

6. The other soldiers advance as best they can, and sometimes they retreat from where they see greater danger; and no one notices this, nor do these soldiers lose honor. As for the former ones, the eyes of all are upon them; they cannot stir. So their office is a good one, and the king does a great honor and favor to the one he gives it to, but the obligation in accepting it is not a small one.

So, Sisters, we don't know what we are asking for. Let us leave it to the Lord. [For He knows us better than we do ourselves. And true humility is content with what is received.] There are some persons who demand favors from God as though these were due them in justice. That's a nice kind of humility! Thus, He who knows all very seldom grants such persons favors, and rightly so. He sees clearly that they are not ready to drink from the chalice.⁸

7. What each of you will understand, daughters, if you are advanced, will be that you are the most wretched of all. And this understanding will be manifested in deeds done for your own spiritual growth and for the good of others, and not in having more delights and raptures in prayer, or visions, or favors of this kind that the Lord grants; for we shall have to wait for the next world to see the value of such experiences. This understanding is like current coin, like unfailing revenue, like having a perpetual annuity and not a sum that's paid only once; for these other experiences come and go. This attitude

includes the great virtues of humility and mortification, careful obedience by not in any way going against what the superior commands, for you truly know that God, in whose place the superior stands, commands it.

It is into this obedience that you must put the most effort; and, in my opinion, where there is no obedience there are no nuns. I am not saying anything about this virtue because I am speaking with nuns and, I think, good ones—at least they desire to be good. In a matter of such wisdom and importance, no more than a word so that it won't be forgotten.

8. I say that I don't know why a nun under obedience by vow is in the monastery if she doesn't make every effort to practice this obedience with greater perfection. At least I can assure her that as long as she fails in obedience she will never attain to being a contemplative, nor will she even be a good active Sister; and I hold this as very, very certain. Even though a person may not have this obligation of the vow, if he desires or aims after contemplation, it is necessary for him in order to proceed correctly to give up his will, with complete determination, to a confessor, who must be the kind [that will understand him.] Since this practice is something already well known—for there is more progress made in this way in one year than without it in many—and it is not necessary for you, there's no need to talk of it.

9. I conclude by saying that these are the virtues I desire you to have, my daughters, the ones you must strive for and about which you should have holy envy. As for those other devotions, there's no need to be sorry about not having them; having them is an uncertain matter. It could be that in other persons they may be from God, whereas in your case His Majesty may permit them to be an illusion of the devil and that you be deceived by him, as were other persons [for in women this is something dangerous]. Why desire to serve the Lord in a doubtful way when you have so much that is safe? Who places you in these dangers?

10. I have enlarged so much on this subject because I know it is important; for this nature of ours is weak, and His Majesty will strengthen anyone to whom He wishes to give contempla-

tion. I have paused to give these counsels to those to whom He doesn't give contemplation. By practicing them, the contemplatives, also, may humble themselves. [If, daughters, you say that you don't need them, perhaps someone else will come along who will be pleased to have them.]

May the Lord, because of who He is, give us light to follow His will in everything, and there will be nothing to fear.

Chapter 19

Begins to discuss prayer. Speaks to souls unable to reason with the intellect.

SO MANY DAYS HAVE GONE BY since I wrote the above, days in which I haven't had time to return to it, that if I don't reread it I won't know what I was saying. So as not to take up time, I'll have to let this work turn out in whatever way it does, without any order. There are so many good books written by able persons for those who have methodical minds and for souls that are experienced and can concentrate within themselves that it would be a mistake if you paid attention to what I say about prayer. As I say, there are books in which the mysteries of the Lord's life and Passion are divided according to the days of the week, and there are meditations about judgement, hell, our nothingness, and the many things we owe God together with excellent doctrine and method concerning the beginning and end of prayer.¹ There is nothing for me to say to anyone who can form the habit of following this method of prayer, or who has already formed it, for by means of so good a path the Lord will draw him to the haven of light. And through such a good beginning the end will be reached. All who are able to walk along this path will have rest and security, for when the intellect is bound one proceeds peacefully.

But what I would like to speak about and offer a remedy for, if the Lord should will that I succeed — and if I don't, at least you will understand that there are many souls who undergo this

trial, and those of you who suffer it will not grow weary—is the following.

2. There are some souls and minds so scattered they are like wild horses no one can stop. Now they're running here, now there, always restless. [And if the rider is skillful, there is not always a danger—just sometimes. But even though his life is in no danger, he is not free from some dishonor in mounting the wild horse; and there is always some hardship.] This restlessness is either caused by the soul's nature or permitted by God. I pity these souls greatly, for they seem to be like very thirsty persons who see water in the distance, but when they want to go there, they meet someone who prevents their passing from the beginning through the middle to the end. It happens that after they have conquered the first enemy through their labor—and through a great deal of labor—they let themselves be conquered by the second; they would rather die of thirst than drink water so costly. Their efforts cease, their courage fails. And when some have the courage to conquer the second class of enemy as well, their strength gives way when they meet the third, and perhaps they were no more than two steps from the fount of living water, of which the Savior said to the Samaritan woman, "whoever drinks of it will never thirst."² How right and true, as words coming from the mouth of Truth Itself, that such a person will not thirst for anything in this life—although thirst for the things of the next life increases much more than can ever be imagined through natural thirst! How thirsty one becomes for this thirst! The soul understands the great value of this thirst, and even though the thirst is a most painful, wearying one, it brings with it the very satisfaction by which it is assuaged, in such a way that it is a thirst unquenchable except in earthly things. Indeed, this thirst slakes in such a way that when God satisfies the thirst, the greatest favor He can grant the soul is to leave in it this same need—and a greater one—to drink the water again.

3. Water has three properties that I now recall as applicable to our subject, for it must have many more. The first is that it refreshes; for, no matter how much heat we may experience, as soon as we approach the water the heat goes away. If there is a

great fire, it is extinguished by water—unless the fire burns from pitch; then it is enkindled more. Oh, God help me, what marvels there are in this greater enkindling of the fire by water when the fire is strong, powerful, and not subject to the elements. For this water doesn't impede the fire, though it is fire's contrary, but rather makes the fire increase! It would be a great help here to be able to speak with someone who knows philosophy, for in knowing the properties of things he would be able to explain to me what I enjoy thinking about but don't know how to speak of or even perhaps understand.

4. Those of you, Sisters, who drink this water and you others, once the Lord brings you to drink, will enjoy it and understand how the true love of God—if it is strong, completely free of earthly things, and if it flies above them—is lord of all the elements and of the world. And since water flows from the earth, don't fear that it will extinguish this fire of the love of God; such a thing does not lie within its power. Even though the two are contraries, this fire is absolute lord; it isn't subject to water. Hence do not be surprised, Sisters, about the many things I have written in this book so that you might obtain this liberty. Isn't it wonderful that a poor nun of St. Joseph's can attain dominion over all the earth and the elements? No wonder the saints, with the help of God, were able to do with the elements whatever they wanted. Fire and water obeyed St. Martin; even the birds and the fish, St. Francis; and so it was with many other saints. There was clear evidence that they had dominion over all worldly things because they labored to take little account of them and were truly subject with all their strength to the Lord of the world. So, as I say, the water that rises from the earth has no power over the love of God; the flames of this love are very high, and the source of it is not found in anything so lowly.

There are other little fires of love of God that any event will extinguish. But extinguish this fire? No, not at all! Even though a whole sea of temptations comes, the fire will not be put out and thereby made to lose control over these temptations.³ [For with the help of God and doing what lies in their power, men can almost seek this love by right. Do you think that because

the Psalmist says that all things are subject to man and put under his feet that it is so with all men? Not at all! On the contrary, I see many of them subject to and trampled upon by things. In fact, I knew a gentleman who was killed in a quarrel over a few dimes. What a miserable price he was subject to. There are many things you will see every day from which you will know that I am speaking the truth. If the psalmist couldn't lie—for what he says is from the Holy Spirit—it seems to me that the saying, "they will rule over all earthly things," pertains to the perfect. It could be that I don't understand and am foolish, but I have read this.^{4]}

5. Well, if it is water that rains from heaven, so much less will it extinguish this fire; the two are not contraries but from the same land. Have no fear that the one element will do harm to the other; rather, they help each other produce their effect. For the water of true tears, those that flow in true prayer, readily given by the King of heaven, helps the fire burn more and last longer; and the fire helps the water bring refreshment. Oh, God help me, what a beautiful and marvelous thing, that fire makes one feel cooler! Yes, and it even freezes all worldly attachments when it is joined to the living water from heaven. Heaven is the source of the tears that were mentioned, for they are given and not acquired through our own efforts. Therefore, this living water will certainly not let the heat from worldly things detain the soul—unless to allow the soul to communicate this fire to others. For by its nature this fire is not content with little; it would burn up the whole world if it could.

6. Another property of water is that it cleans dirty things. What would the world be like if there were no water for washing? Do you know how clean this water is, this heavenly water, this clear water, when it isn't cloudy, when it isn't muddy, but falls from heaven? Once this water has been drunk, I am certain that it leaves the soul bright and cleansed of all faults. Since this divine union is something very supernatural, it is not a matter of our own choosing. As I have written,⁵ God doesn't permit a soul to drink this water unless to cleanse it and leave it clean and free from all the mud and misery in which,

through its own faults, it was stuck. Other delights that come through the medium of the intellect, however much they may accomplish, come from water running on the ground; they do not come from drinking at the fount. There is never a lack of muddy things to detain one on this path, and the water is not so pure and clean. Living water is not what I call this prayer in which, as I say, there is reasoning with the intellect; I mean from the way I understand things. For something from the road that we don't want will stick to our soul and be helped to cling there by our body and natural lowliness, however much we may want to avoid this.

7. Let me explain myself further: suppose that in order to despise the world we are thinking about its nature and how all things come to an end. Almost without our realizing it we find ourselves thinking about the things we like in the world; and in desiring to flee them, we are at least hindered a little by thinking about how they were and how they will be and what we will do; in order to think of what we must do to free ourselves, we place ourselves in danger again. Not that this reasoning must be abandoned, but one must be fearful; it's necessary to proceed with care.

By means of this living water the Lord Himself takes up these cares, for He doesn't want to entrust them to us.⁶ He so esteems our soul that He doesn't allow it to be occupied with things that can harm it during the time He wishes to favor it. Rather, He immediately places it near Himself and shows it in an instant more truths, and gives it clearer understanding of what everything is, than we could have here below in many years. For our eyes don't see clearly; the dust blinds us as we walk. By this living water the Lord brings us to the end of the journey without our understanding how.

8. The other property of water is that it satisfies to the full and takes away thirst. To me it seems that thirst signifies the desire for something of which we are in great want, so that if the thing is completely lacking its absence will kill us. How strange that if water is lacking, this lack kills us; and if there is too much, we die, as is seen through the many who drown. O my Lord, and who will find himself so immersed in this living

water that he will die! But, is this possible? Yes, because the love of God and desire for Him can increase so much that the natural subject is unable to endure it, and so there have been persons who have died from love. I know of one who would have died if God hadn't succored her immediately with such an abundance of this living water, for she was almost carried out of herself with raptures.⁷ I say that she was almost carried out of herself because in this water the soul finds rest. It seems that while she is drowning from not being able to endure the world, she is revived in God; and His Majesty enables her to enjoy what in herself she couldn't without dying.

9. It should be understood here that since there can be nothing imperfect in our supreme Good, everything He gives is for our good; and however great the abundance of this water He gives, there cannot be too much in anything of His. If He gives a great deal, He gives the soul, as I said,⁸ the capacity to drink much; like a glassmaker who makes the vessel a size he sees is necessary in order to hold what he intends to pour into it.

In desiring this water there is always some fault, since the desire comes from ourselves; if some good comes, it comes from the Lord who helps. But we are so indiscreet that since the pain is sweet and delightful, we never think we can have enough of this pain. We eat without measure, we foster this desire as much as we can, and so sometimes it kills. How fortunate such a death! But perhaps by continuing to live we can help others die of desire for this death. And I believe the devil causes this desire for death, for he understands the harm that can be done by such a person while alive; and so at this stage he tempts one to perform indiscreet penances so that one's health will be lost, which would be no small gain for the devil.

10. I say that anyone who reaches the experience of this thirst that is so impelling should be very careful because I believe he will have this temptation. And although he may not die of thirst, his health will be lost and he will give exterior manifestations of this thirst, even though he may not want to; these manifestations should be avoided at all costs. Sometimes our diligence is of little avail, for we will be unable to hide everything we would like to hide. But when these impulses that

so greatly increase this desire to die come, we should be careful not to add to the desire, but gently cut the thread with another consideration. For our nature at times can be as much at work as the love; there are persons who will vehemently desire anything, even if it is bad. I don't believe these persons will be very mortified, for mortification helps in everything. It seems foolish to cut short something so good; but it isn't. For I do not say that the desire is taken away, but that it is cut short, and perhaps by another desire as meritorious as the former.

11. I wish to say something in order to explain myself better: a great desire is given to see oneself with God and to be loosed from this prison, like the desire St. Paul had.⁹ Pain for a reason like this must in itself be very delightful; no small amount of mortification is needed to break it off, and one will be unable to do so completely. Sometimes the pain is seen to afflict so much that it almost takes away one's reason. Not long ago I saw a person of an impetuous nature who, even though she was experienced in going against her will—I think she had already lost it, as was seen in other things—was deranged for a while by the great pain and the effort that was made to conceal this pain. I hold that in so extreme a case, even though the experience may come from the Spirit of God, the humble thing is to be fearful, for we shouldn't think we have so much charity that it will put us in such straits.

12. If a person is able—for perhaps he will not always be able—I say that I wouldn't consider it wrong if he were to remove the desire by the thought that if he lives he will serve God more and enlighten some soul that would have been lost, and that by serving more he will merit the capacity to enjoy God more. And let him fear the little that he has served. These consoling thoughts are good for so great a work. His affliction will be mitigated, and he will gain very much. For in order to serve the Lord Himself, one should desire to suffer here below and live with the Lord's affliction. It's as when one has a great trial or a heavy sorrow; you comfort him by telling him to be patient and leave it in the hands of God and that the Lord's will is being done by it, for in every event the best we can do is leave ourselves in the hands of God.

13. It would be possible for the devil in some way to foster such a great desire. The account is given, I believe in Cassian, of a hermit who lived a most austere life. The devil made him think that by throwing himself into a well he would see God more quickly.¹⁰ I truly believe that this hermit could not have served with humility or goodness; for the Lord is faithful, and His Majesty would not consent that one be blinded in a matter so obvious. But clearly, if the desire were from God, it wouldn't cause any harm: such a desire bears light, discretion, and measure. But this adversary and enemy of ours tries to cause harm wherever he can; and since he doesn't go about carelessly, neither should we. This is an important point for many reasons. Thus the time of prayer should be shortened, however delightful the prayer may be, when it is seen that the bodily energies are failing or that the head might suffer harm. Discretion is very necessary in all.

14. Why do you think, daughters, that I have tried to explain the goal and show you the reward before the battle, by telling you about the good that comes from drinking of this heavenly fount, of this living water? So that you will not be dismayed by the trial and contradiction there is along the way, and advance with courage and not grow weary. For, as I have said,¹¹ it can happen that after having arrived you will have nothing left to do but stoop and drink from the fount; and yet you will abandon everything and lose this good, thinking that you have not the strength to reach it and that you are not meant for it.

15. Behold, the Lord invites all. Since He is truth itself, there is no reason to doubt. If this invitation were not a general one, the Lord wouldn't have called us all, and even if He called all, He wouldn't have promised, "I will give you to drink."¹² He could have said, "Come all of you, for in the end you won't lose anything, and to those whom I choose I will give to drink." But since He spoke without this condition to all, I hold as certain that all those who do not falter on the way will drink this living water. May the Lord, because of who He is, give us the grace to seek this living water as it should be sought, for He promises it.

Chapter 20

How in different ways consolation is never lacking on the path of prayer. Counsels the Sisters to let their conversations deal always with prayer.

IT SEEMS I CONTRADICTED in the previous chapter what I had said before. When I was consoling those who were not contemplatives,¹ I said that the Lord had different paths by which to go to Him just as there are many dwelling places.² So I repeat it now. Since His Majesty has understood our weakness, He has provided after the manner of who He is. But He did not say: "some come by this path, and others by another." Rather, His mercy was so great He excluded no one from striving to come to this fount of life to drink. May He be blessed forever! And how rightly might He have excluded me!

2. Now, since He didn't stop me when I started to walk along this path, nor order me to be thrown into the abyss, surely He excludes no one; rather, He calls us publicly, crying aloud.³ But since He is so good, He does not force us; on the contrary, in many ways He gives drink to those who wish to follow Him so that no one will go without consolation or die of thirst. Rivers stream from this overflowing fount, some large, others small; and sometimes little pools for children—for that is enough for them, and moreover it would frighten them to see a lot of water. These children are the ones who are at the beginning. So, Sisters, do not fear that you will die of thirst on this road. Never is the lack of consoling water such that it cannot be endured. Since this is so, take my advice and do not stop on the road but, like the strong, fight even to death in the search, for you are not here for any other reason than to fight. You must always proceed with this determination to die rather than fail to reach the end of the journey. If even though you so proceed, the Lord should lead you in such a way that you are left with some thirst in this life, in the life that lasts forever He will give you to drink in great plenty and you will have no fear of being without water. May it please the Lord that we ourselves do not fail, amen.

3. Now, that you might so walk along this path of prayer that you do not go astray at the beginning, let us deal a little with how this journey must begin; for the beginning is the more important part—indeed it is the most important part for everything. I don't say that if a person doesn't have the determination of which I shall speak here, he should stop trying; for the Lord will continue perfecting him. And if that person should do no more than take one step, the step will contain in itself so much power that he will not have to fear losing it, nor will he fail to be very well paid.

This situation can be compared to that of a person who uses beads to count indulgenced prayers. If he uses them once, he gains the indulgences; if he uses them more often, he gains more; but if he never uses them, keeping them rather in a chest, it would be better for him not to have them. So it is here: even though afterward a person may not continue on the same road, the little progress he may have made on it will have provided him with light so that he may walk well on other paths; and the greater the progress, the more light. In sum, even if later he gives up, he may be certain that it will not have done him any harm to have begun; for good never produces evil.

Thus, daughters, in reference to all the persons who speak with you, if they are disposed and there is some friendship, try to remove any fear they may have of beginning to use so great a good. And for the love of God I beg you that your conversation always be directed toward bringing some good to the one with whom you are speaking, for your prayer must be for the benefit of souls. And since the good of souls is what you must always beg the Lord for, it would seem wrong, Sisters, if you did not strive for this in every way.

4. If you want to be a good relative, this desire to be of benefit to the relative is where true friendship lies; if you want to be a good friend, know that you cannot be one save by this path. Let truth dwell in your hearts, as it should through meditation, and you will see clearly the kind of love we are obliged to have for our neighbor.

There's no longer time, Sisters, for children's games, for

these worldly friendships, even though they may be good, seem to be nothing else. Unless there is a very good reason and it is for the benefit of that soul, don't let your conversation be of the sort in which you ask, "Do you like me?" or "Don't you like me?" It can happen that in order that your relative or brother or a similar person listen to a truth you want to point out and admit it you will have to dispose him by means of these words and demonstrations of love that are always pleasing to sensuality. It will happen that a good word, as these are called, will do more and dispose one more than will many about God so that afterward these latter may be accepted. And thus if you use them knowingly for the benefit of others, I do not forbid them. But if they are not used for this reason, they will be of no avail and may do harm without your realizing it. Others already know that you are religious and that your business is prayer. Don't think to yourself that you don't want them to consider you good, for what they see in you is to the benefit or harm of all. And it is a serious wrong for those who have so great an obligation to speak of God, as do nuns, to think that it is good for them to hide their feelings about God; although they may be allowed to do this sometimes for a greater good. God is your business and language. Whoever wants to speak to you must learn this language; and if he doesn't, be on your guard that you don't learn his; it will be a hell.

5. If they should think you're unsophisticated, what does it matter? If they take you for hypocrites, it matters even less. You will gain in that no one will want to see you except the one who understands this language. There wouldn't be much reason for anyone who doesn't know Arabic to enjoy speaking a great deal with one who knows only that language. And so, neither will they make you weary or do you harm, for to begin to speak a new language would cause no small amount of harm, and all your time would be spent in learning it. And you cannot know as I do, for I have experience of it, the great evil this new language is for the soul; in order to know the one, the other is forgotten. The new language involves a constant disturbance from which you ought to flee at all costs, for what is very suited to this path that we are beginning to discuss is peace and tranquillity of soul.

6. If those who speak with you wish to learn your language, though it is not your business to teach anyone, you can tell about the riches that are gained in learning it since telling of this is beneficial to the other, and when he learns about the great gain that is to be had, he may go and seek out a master who will teach him. It would be no small favor from the Lord if you were to succeed in awakening some soul to this good.

But how many things come to mind in beginning to discuss this path, even to the mind of one who has walked it as poorly as I. [Would that I had many hands with which to write so that while putting down some of these things I wouldn't forget the others.] May the Lord be pleased, Sisters, that I know how to speak of it better than I have practiced it, amen.

Chapter 21

Tells how important it is to begin the practice of prayer with great determination and not pay any attention to obstacles set up by the devil.

DO NOT BE FRIGHTENED, daughters, by the many things you need to consider in order to begin this divine journey which is the royal road to heaven. A great treasure is gained by traveling this road; no wonder we have to pay what seems to us a high price. The time will come when you will understand how trifling everything is next to so precious a reward.

2. Now returning to those who want to journey on this road¹ and continue until they reach the end, which is to drink from this water of life,² I say that how they are to begin is very important—in fact, all important.³ They must have a great and very resolute determination to persevere until reaching the end, come what may, happen what may, whatever work is involved, whatever criticism arises, whether they arrive or whether they die on the road, or even if they don't have courage for the trials that are met, or if the whole world col-

lapses. You will hear some persons frequently making objections: "there are dangers"; "so-and-so went astray by such means"; "this other one was deceived"; "another who prayed a great deal fell away"; "it's harmful to virtue"; "it's not for women, for they will be susceptible to illusions"; "it's better they stick to their sewing"; "they don't need these delicacies"; "the Our Father and the Hail Mary are sufficient."

3. This last statement, Sisters, I agree with. And indeed they are sufficient! It is always good to base your prayer on prayers coming from the mouth of the Lord. In this matter those who warn us are right, for if our nature were not so weak and our devotion so lukewarm there wouldn't be any need to compose other prayers, nor would there be need for other books. As I say,⁴ I am speaking to souls that cannot recollect their minds in the thought of other mysteries because they think some kind of skill is needed, and there are some minds so ingenious that they're never satisfied with any of their thoughts. So it seems to me now that I should proceed by setting down some points here about the beginning, the means, and the end of prayer. I shall not take time to dwell on more sublime things. No one will be able to take from you these books (the Our Father and the Hail Mary), and if you are eager to learn you won't need anything else provided you are humble.⁵ I have always been fond of the words of the Gospels [that have come from that most sacred mouth in the way they were said] and found more recollection in them than in very cleverly written books. I especially had no desire to read these books if the author was not well approved. If, then, I draw near to this Master of wisdom, He will perhaps teach me some worthwhile thoughts that will please you.

I don't say that I'm going to write a commentary on these divine prayers,⁶ for I wouldn't dare. Many commentaries have been written; and even if they hadn't been, it would be absurd for me to write one. But I will mention some thoughts on the words of the Our Father. For sometimes, with regard to many books, it seems we lose devotion in the very exercise in which it is so important for us to have devotion. Clearly, when a master teaches something he gets to love his disciple and is pleased if

that which he teaches satisfies his pupil, and he helps him a great deal to learn the material. The heavenly Master will do the same with us.

5. Hence, don't pay any attention to the fears they raise or to the picture of the dangers they paint for you. Wouldn't it be nice if while desiring to procure a great treasure I should want to walk without danger along a path where there are so many robbers. It would be a pleasant world if they would let you get the treasure in peace. But for a penny's worth of self-interest they will go many nights without sleep and disturb you in body and soul. For when you are about to gain the treasure – or steal it, since the Lord says that the violent take it away⁷ – by a royal road and by a safe road, the road chosen by our King and all His elect and saints, they will tell you that there are so many dangers and so many things to fear. How many more dangers are there for those who think they obtain this good without following a road?

6. Oh, my daughters! There are incomparably more dangers for such persons, but people don't know about them until they bump blindly into the true danger when there is no one to give them a hand; and they lose the water entirely without drinking either little or much – neither from a small pool nor from a stream.

So you see, how will one journey without a drop of this water on a road where there are so many struggles? It is clear that when it is needed most they will not have it and will die of thirst. Because whether we like it or not, my daughters, we must all journey toward this fount, even though in different ways. Well, believe me; and don't let anyone deceive you by showing you a road other than that of prayer.

7. I am not speaking now about whether the prayer should be mental or vocal for everyone. In your case, I say that you need both. Such is the duty of religious. Should anyone tell you that prayer is dangerous, consider him the real danger and run from him. Don't forget this counsel, for perhaps you will need it. There will be danger in not having humility and the other virtues. But that the way of prayer be a way of danger – God

would never will that. It seems the devil has invented these fears, and so he has been skillful, apparently, in making some who have practiced prayer fall away.

8. And see how blind the world is, for they fail to consider the many thousands who have fallen into heresies and great evils because they didn't practice prayer but engaged in distractions. And if in order to carry on his work better the devil has caused, among this multitude of persons, some of those who practiced prayer to fall, he has caused as much fear in others about virtuous things. Those who take this reasoning as a refuge in order to free themselves should be on their guard, for they are running away from good in order to free themselves from evil. Never have I seen such a wicked contrivance; it really seems to come from the devil. O my Lord, defend Yourself! See how they understand Your words in reverse. Don't permit such weaknesses in Your servants. [Hold fast, daughters, for they cannot take from you the Our Father and the Hail Mary.]^a

9. There's one great blessing: you will always find some who will help you, because this is a characteristic of the real servant of God to whom His Majesty has given light concerning the true way; in the midst of these fears the desire not to give up increases within him. He understands clearly where the devil is going to strike, flees from him and crushes his head. The devil feels more regret over this than he does satisfaction over the many pleasures that others give him. In a time of disturbance, of discord caused by the devil – for it seems all are following him half blind because they do so under the guise of zeal – God will raise up someone to open the eyes of these half-blind people and tell them that the devil has placed a cloud in front of them to prevent their seeing the way. Oh, the greatness of God, for sometimes one or two men alone can do more when they speak the truth than many together! Little by little, souls discover again the way; God gives them courage. If they are told there is danger in prayer, one of these servants of God will strive, if not in words then in deeds, to make known how good prayer is. If they are told that frequent Communion is not good, he will receive more frequently. Thus, since there are

one or two who fearlessly do what is best, the Lord at once begins to win back gradually the ground that was lost.

10. Therefore, Sisters, give up these fears; never pay attention in like matters to the opinion of the crowd. Behold, these are not the times to believe everyone; believe only those who you see are walking in conformity with Christ's life. Try to preserve a pure conscience, humility, and contempt for all worldly things; believe firmly what Holy Mother Church holds, and you can be sure you will be walking along a good path.

Leave aside, as I said,⁹ your fears where there is no reason for fear. If someone should raise these fears to you, humbly explain the path to him. Tell him you have a rule that commands you to pray unceasingly—for that's what it commands us¹⁰—and that you have to keep it. If they tell you that the prayer should be vocal, ask, for the sake of more precision, if in vocal prayer the mind and heart must be attentive to what you say. If they answer "yes"—for they cannot answer otherwise—you will see how they admit that you are forced to practice mental prayer and even experience contemplation if God should give it to you by such a means.

Chapter 22

Explains what mental prayer is.

REALIZE, DAUGHTERS, that the nature of mental prayer isn't determined by whether or not the mouth is closed. If while speaking I thoroughly understand and know that I am speaking with God and I have greater awareness of this than I do of the words I'm saying, mental and vocal prayer are joined. If, however, others tell you that you are speaking with God while you are reciting the Our Father and at the same time in fact thinking of the world, then I have nothing to say. But if you are to be speaking, as is right, with so great a Lord, it is good that you consider whom you are speaking with as well as who you are, at least if you want to be polite. How can you

call the king “your highness” or know the ceremonies to be observed in addressing a highest ranking nobleman if you do not clearly understand what his position is and what yours is? For it is in conformity with these facts that you must show respect, and in conformity with custom—because you also need to know even the customs. If you don’t know them, you will be sent away as a simpleton and will fail to negotiate anything. [And what’s more, if you don’t know these things well, you will need to find out and even rehearse what you must say. Once it happened to me¹ that, not having been accustomed to speaking with lords and ladies I had to speak with someone who was to be addressed as your ladyship; and so they had to show me how to say it. Since I am dull and was not used to these titles, I didn’t get it right when the time came. I decided to tell her what happened and, laughing at myself, asked her to allow me to address her with the ordinary form “you”; and so I did.]

Well, what is this, my Lord? What is this, my Emperor? How can it be tolerated? You are King forever, my God; Your kingdom is not a borrowed one. When in the Creed the words, “and His kingdom will have no end,” are said, it is almost always a special delight for me. I praise You, Lord, and bless You forever; in sum, Your kingdom will last forever. Well then, may You never permit, Lord, that anyone who is about to speak to You consider it good to do so only vocally.

2. What is this, Christians, that you say mental prayer isn’t necessary? Do you understand yourselves?²² Indeed, I don’t think you do, and so you desire that we all be misled. You don’t know what mental prayer is, or how vocal prayer should be recited, or what contemplation is, for if you did you wouldn’t on the one hand condemn what on the other hand you praise.

3. I shall always have to join mental prayer to vocal prayer—when I remember—so that others don’t frighten you, daughters. I know how this criticism of mental prayer will end up, for I have suffered some trials in this matter, and thus I wouldn’t want anyone to disturb you. It is harmful to walk on this road with fear. It is very important for you to know that you are on the right road. When a traveler is told that he has

made a mistake and lost his way, he is made to go from one end to another, and all his searching for the way tires him, and he wastes time and arrives late.

Who can say that it is wrong, when we begin to recite the Hours or the rosary, to consider whom we are going to speak with, and who we are, so as to know how to speak with Him? Now I tell you, Sisters, if before you begin your vocal prayer you do the great deal that must be done in order to understand these two points well, you will be spending a good amount of time in mental prayer. Yes, indeed, for we must not approach a conversation with a prince as negligently as we do one with a farm worker, or with some poor thing like ourselves for whom any manner of address is all right.

4. It is only right that we consider these two points since, because of his humility, this King listens to me and lets me approach Him; and His guards do not throw me out, even though as an uneducated person I don't know how to speak to Him. The angels who assist Him know well the attitude of their King, for He delights more in the unpolished manners of a humble shepherd who He realizes would say more if he knew more than He does in the talk of very wise and learned men, however elegant their discourse, if they don't walk in humility. But just because He is good doesn't mean that we should be rude. At least, in order to thank Him for the bad odor He must endure in consenting to allow one like myself to come near Him, we should strive to be aware of His purity and of who He is. It's true that upon approaching Him one understands immediately, just as with lords here below; for when they tell us who their father was and about the millions they get in rent and of their title of dignity, there's no more to know. In fact, here below people in paying honor don't take into account the persons themselves, however much these persons may deserve the honor, but their wealth.

5. O miserable world! Praise God very much, daughters, because you have left something so wretched, where men pay attention not to what they have within themselves but to what their tenant farmers and vassals have; and if these men lack subordinates then no honor is paid them. It's something amus-

ing to relax over when you all have to take some recreation. For this is a good pastime: to notice how blindly those who are in the world spend their time.

6. Oh, our Emperor, supreme Power, supreme Goodness, Wisdom itself, without beginning, without end, without any limit to Your works; they are infinite and incomprehensible, a fathomless sea of marvels, with a beauty containing all beauty, strength itself! Oh, God help me, who might possess here all human eloquence and wisdom together in order to know how to explain clearly—insofar as is possible here below, because in this case all knowledge is equivalent to knowing nothing—a number of the many things we can consider in order to have some knowledge of who this Lord and Good of ours is!

7. Yes, bring yourselves to consider and understand whom you are speaking with, or, as you approach, with whom you are about to speak. In a thousand lives we would never completely understand the way in which this Lord deserves that we speak with Him, for the angels tremble before Him. He commands all; He can do all; for Him, to will is to do. Well then, it is only right, daughters, that we try to delight in these grandeurs our Spouse possesses and that we understand whom we are wedded to and what kind of life we must live. Oh, God help me, here below before getting married a person will know the other party, who he is and what he possesses. We are already betrothed and before the wedding must be brought to His house. Here below they don't try to make those who are betrothed renounce such thoughts. Why should they try to prevent us from thinking about who this man is, who His Father is, what country He is going to bring me to, what good things He promises to give me, what His status is, how I can make Him happy, and in what ways I can please Him, and from studying how I can conform my way of life to His? Now if a woman is to be happily married, she must, according to the advice she receives, strive for this conformity even though her husband is a man of lowly estate.

8. Well, my Spouse, must they in everything pay less attention to You than to men? If paying more attention to You doesn't seem right to them, let them at least leave Your brides

alone, for these latter must live their lives with You. Indeed, their life is a good one. If a spouse is so jealous that he doesn't want his bride to talk to anyone, it would be a fine thing if she didn't think about how she might please him in this matter and the reason she has for putting up with this jealousy and for wanting to avoid speaking with another since in him she has all that she could want!

This is mental prayer, my daughters: to understand these truths. If you should want to grow in understanding these things and pray vocally, well and good. You should not be thinking of other things while speaking with God, for doing so amounts to not knowing what mental prayer is. I believe the matter has been explained. May it please the Lord that we know how to put it into practice. Amen.³

Chapter 23

Treats of how important it is for one who has begun the path of prayer not to turn back and speaks once more of the great value that lies in beginning with determination.

WELL NOW, I SAY there are so many reasons why it is extremely important to begin with great determination that I would have to go on at much length if I mentioned them all. Sisters, I want to mention only two or three.

One is that if we resolve to give something, that is, this little care, to someone who has given so much to us and continually gives—giving this little care is certainly to our advantage and we thereby gain so many wonderful things—there is no reason for failing to give with complete determination. There's no reason for being like the lender who gives something with the intention of getting it back again. Lending doesn't seem to me to amount to giving; rather, there is always some displeasure felt by the borrower when the object is taken back, especially if he needs it and has already used it as his own, or if the lender is

his friend, or if the borrower has given the lender many gifts without any self-seeking. The borrower would rightly think there was very little love in the lender who won't even let him keep a little thing, not even as a sign of love.

2. What bride is there who in receiving many valuable jewels from her bridegroom will refuse to give him even a ring, not because of what it is worth, for everything belongs to him, but to give it as a pledge that she will be his until death? Does this Lord deserve less, that we should mock Him by giving and then taking back the trifle that we gave Him? But this little bit of time that we resolve to give Him, which we spend on ourselves and on someone who will not thank us for it, let us give to Him, since we desire to do so, with our thoughts free of other things and unoccupied by them. And let us be wholly determined never to take it back from Him, neither because of trials on this account, nor because of contradictions, nor because of dryness. I should consider the time of prayer as not belonging to me and think that He can ask it of me in justice when I do not want to give it wholly to Him.

3. In saying "wholly," I do not mean that abandoning it for a day or for a few days on account of some just occupations or because of some indisposition is the equivalent of taking it back. Let the intention be firm; my God is not at all touchy; He doesn't bother about trifling things. Thus you will have something to be grateful for; this intention amounts to giving something. As for others, for anyone who is not generous but so stingy that he doesn't have the spirit of giving, it is enough for them to lend. In the end, one who lends does do something, and this Lord of ours takes everything into account. He adjusts Himself to our way of giving. In taking account of us, He is not at all petty, but generous. However great our debt may be, He finds it easy to pardon; but when there is a question of His repaying us, He's so careful that you need have no fear. Just the raising of our eyes in remembrance of Him will have its reward.

4. Another reason for beginning with determination is that the devil will not then have so free a hand to tempt. He's extremely afraid of determined souls, for he has experienced the

great harm they do him. And all the harm he plans to do them turns out to their benefit and to that of others as well; and he comes out with a loss. But we should not be careless or trust in this fact, for we are dealing with traitors, and they don't dare attack so often those who are well prepared; they are very cowardly. But if the devil should see carelessness, he would do great harm. And if he knows that someone is changeable and unstable in being good and not strongly determined to persevere, he will keep after him day and night; he will cause fears and never-ending obstacles. I know this very well through experience, and that's why I'm able to say, and do say, that no one knows how important determination is.

5. The other reason for beginning with determination is—and it is very much to the point—that the person who does so struggles more courageously. He knows that come what may he will not turn back. As in the case of one who is in a battle, he knows that if he is conquered they won't spare him his life and that if he doesn't die in battle he will die afterward. He struggles with greater determination and wants to fight like a desperado—as they say—and he doesn't fear the blows so much, because he is convinced of how important victory is and that for him to conquer is to live. It's also necessary to begin with the assurance that if we don't let ourselves be conquered, we will obtain our goal; this without a doubt, for no matter how small the gain, one will end up being very rich. Don't be afraid that the Lord will leave you to die of thirst, for He calls us to drink from this fount.¹ I have already said this² and would like to say it many times, for the devil intimidates persons who don't yet fully know the goodness of the Lord through experience, even though they know it through faith. But it is a great thing to have experienced the friendship and favor He shows toward those who journey on this road and how He takes care of almost all the expenses.

6. I'm not surprised that those who have not experienced this want the assurance of some gain for themselves. Well, you already know there is the hundredfold even in this life³ and that the Lord says, "ask, and you will receive."⁴ If you don't believe His Majesty in the sections of His gospel that insure this

gain, it will be of little benefit, Sisters, for me to break my head in trying to tell you about it. Nevertheless, I say that should anyone have some doubt little would be lost in trying the journey of prayer; for this journey brings with it the following good: more is given than is asked for, beyond what we could desire. This is absolutely true; I know. And those of you who know it by experience, through the goodness of God, can be my witnesses.⁵

Chapter 24

How vocal prayer must be recited with perfection, and mental prayer joined with it.

NOW, THEN, LET US SPEAK AGAIN¹ to those souls I mentioned that cannot recollect or tie their minds down in mental prayer or engage in reflection. Let's not mention here by name these two things, since you are not meant to follow such a path. As a matter of fact there are many persons seemingly terrified by the mere term "mental prayer" or "contemplation," and perhaps one of these might come to this house, for as I have also said² not everyone walks by the same path.

2. Well what I now want to counsel you about (I can even say teach you, because as a Mother, having the office of prioress, I'm allowed to teach) is how you must pray vocally, for it's only right that you should understand what you're saying. And because it can happen that those who are unable to think about God may also find long prayers tiring, I don't want to concern myself with these. But I will speak of those prayers we are obliged as Christians to recite (such as, the Our Father and the Hail Mary) so that people won't be able to say of us that we speak and don't understand what we're speaking about — unless we think it is enough for us to follow the practice in which merely pronouncing the words is sufficient. I'm not concerned with whether this is sufficient or not; learned men

will explain [the matter to those persons to whom God gives light to ask the question. And I'm not meddling with what doesn't belong to our state.] What I would like us to do, daughters, is refuse to be satisfied with merely pronouncing the words. For when I say, "I believe," it seems to me right that I should know and understand what I believe. And when I say, "Our Father," it will be an act of love to understand who this Father of ours is and who the Master is who taught us this prayer.

3. If you reply that you already know this and that there is no reason to recall it, you are wrong. There is a large difference in teachers; but it is even a great misfortune if we forget those who teach us here below. Especially, if they are saints and spiritual masters and we are good disciples, it is impossible to forget them [but we love them very much and even take pride in them and often speak of them.] Well, God never allows us to forget the Master who taught us this prayer, and with so much love and desire that it benefit us. He wants us to remember Him often when we say the prayer, even though because of our weakness we do not remember Him always.

4. Now with regard to vocal prayer you already know that His Majesty teaches that it be recited in solitude.³ This is what He always did when He prayed,⁴ and not out of any need of His own but for our instruction. It has already been mentioned⁵ that one cannot speak simultaneously to God and to the world; this would amount to nothing more than reciting the prayer while listening to what is being said elsewhere or to letting the mind wander and making no effort to control it. There can be exceptions at times either because of bad humors—especially if the person is melancholic—or because of faint feelings in the head so that all efforts become useless. Or it can happen that God will permit days of severe temptation in his servants for their greater good. And though in their affliction they are striving to be quiet, they cannot even be attentive to what they are saying, no matter how hard they try; nor will the intellect settle down in anything, but by the disordered way it goes about, it will seem to be in a frenzy.

5. Whoever experiences the affliction these distractions

cause will see that they are not his fault; he should not grow anxious, which makes things worse, or tire himself trying to put order into something that at the time doesn't have any, that is, his mind. He should just pray as best he can; or even not pray, but like a sick person strive to bring some relief to his soul; let him occupy himself in other works of virtue. This advice now is for persons who are careful and who have understood that they must not speak simultaneously to both God and the world.

What we ourselves can do is to strive to be alone; and please God it will suffice, as I say, that we understand to whom we are speaking and the answer the Lord makes to our petitions. Do you think He is silent? Even though we do not hear Him, He speaks well to the heart when we beseech Him from the heart.

And it is good for us to consider that He taught this prayer to each of us and that He is showing it to us; the teacher is never so far from his pupil that he has to shout, but he is very close. I want you to understand that it is good for you, if you are to recite the Our Father well, to remain at the side of the Master who taught this prayer to you.

6. You will say that doing so involves reflection and that you neither can nor want to pray any other way but vocally; for there are also impatient persons who like to avoid any suffering. Since such individuals do not have the habit, it is difficult for them to recollect their minds in the beginning; and so as to avoid a little fatigue, they say they neither can nor know how to do anything else than pray vocally.

You are right in saying that this vocal prayer is now in fact mental prayer. But I tell you that surely I don't know how mental prayer can be separated from vocal prayer if the vocal prayer is to be recited well with an understanding of whom we are speaking to. It is even an obligation that we strive to pray with attention. Please God that with these remedies we shall recite the Our Father well and not end up in some other irrelevant thing. I have experienced this sometimes, and the best remedy I find is to strive to center the mind upon the one to whom the words are addressed. So, be patient and strive to make a habit out of something that is so necessary [if you are to be good nuns, and even pray as good Christians, in my opinion.]

Chapter 25

Tells how much the soul gains through a perfect recitation of vocal prayer and how God happens to raise it from this prayer to supernatural things.

TO KEEP YOU FROM THINKING that little is gained through a perfect recitation of vocal prayer, I tell you that it is very possible that while you are reciting the Our Father or some other vocal prayer, the Lord may raise you to perfect contemplation. By these means His Majesty shows that He listens to the one who speaks to Him. And it is His grandeur that speaks to the soul, suspending one's intellect, binding one's imagination, and, as they say, taking the words from one's mouth; for even though the soul may want to do so, it cannot speak unless with great difficulty.

2. The soul understands that without the noise of words this divine Master is teaching it by suspending its faculties, for if they were to be at work they would do harm rather than bring benefit. They are enjoying without understanding how they are enjoying. The soul is being enkindled in love, and it doesn't understand how it loves. It knows that it enjoys what it loves, but it doesn't know how. It clearly understands that this joy is not a joy the intellect obtains merely through desire. The will is enkindled without understanding how. But as soon as it can understand something, it sees that this good cannot be merited or gained through all the trials one can suffer on earth. This good is a gift from the Lord of earth and heaven, who, in sum, gives according to who He is. What I have described, daughters, is perfect contemplation.

3. Now you will understand the difference that lies between perfect contemplation and mental prayer. Mental prayer consists of what was explained: being aware and knowing that we are speaking, with whom we are speaking, and who we ourselves are who dare to speak so much with so great a Lord. To think about this and other similar things, of how little we have served Him and how much we are obliged to serve Him, is

mental prayer. Don't think it amounts to some other kind of gibberish, and don't let the name frighten you.

To recite the Our Father or the Hail Mary or whatever prayer you wish is vocal prayer. But behold what poor music you produce when you do this without mental prayer. Even the words will be poorly pronounced at times. In these two kinds of prayer we can do something ourselves, with the help of God. In the contemplation I now mentioned, we can do nothing; His Majesty is the one who does everything, for it is His work and above our nature.

4. Since I explained contemplation very much at length and as best I could in the account of my life that I said I wrote for my confessors¹ — for they had ordered me to write that account — I will not speak of contemplation here or do any more than touch upon it. Those of you who have been so fortunate as to be brought by the Lord to the state of contemplation may, if you can get that account, find there some advice and counsel which God granted that I be able to give; it will be very consoling and beneficial to you. This is what I think, and so do some of those who have seen it — for they have the account in order to make a judgment about it. What shame I feel in telling you that you should pay attention to something I have done, and the Lord knows the embarrassment with which I write much of what I write. May He be blessed for so putting up with me! Those of you who, as I say, experience supernatural prayer may obtain that account after my death; those of you who do not, need not worry about obtaining it but only about striving after what is contained in this present book and leave the rest to God; for it is He who must bestow supernatural prayer, and He will grant it to you if you do not stop short on the road but try hard until you reach the end.²

Chapter 26

Explains a method for recollecting one's mind. Sets down some ways of doing this. The chapter is very useful for beginners in prayer.

NOW THEN LET US RETURN to our vocal prayer that it may be so recited that, without our being aware of the fact, God may grant us everything together and also enable us to say vocal prayers as we should, as I have mentioned.¹

As is already known, the examination of conscience, the act of contrition, and the sign of the cross must come first. Then, daughters, since you are alone, strive to find a companion. Well what better companion than the Master Himself who taught you this prayer? Represent the Lord Himself as close to you and behold how lovingly and humbly He is teaching you. Believe me, you should remain with so good a friend as long as you can. If you grow accustomed to having Him present at your side, and He sees that you do so with love and that you go about striving to please Him, you will not be able – as they say – to get away from Him; He will never fail you; He will help you in all your trials; you will find Him everywhere. Do you think it's some small matter to have a friend like this at your side?

2. O Sisters, those of you who cannot engage in much discursive reflection with the intellect or keep your mind from distraction, get used to this practice! Get used to it! See, I know that you can do this; for I suffered many years from the trial – and it is a very great one – of not being able to quiet the mind in anything. But I know that the Lord does not leave us so abandoned; for if we humbly ask Him for this friendship, He will not deny it to us. And if we cannot succeed in one year, we will succeed later. Let's not regret the time that is so well spent. Who's making us hurry? I am speaking of acquiring this habit and of striving to walk alongside this true Master.

3. I'm not asking you now that you think about Him or that you draw out a lot of concepts or make long and subtle reflec-

tions with your intellect. I'm not asking you to do anything more than look at Him. For who can keep you from turning the eyes of your soul toward this Lord, even if you do so just for a moment if you can't do more? You can look at very ugly things; won't you be able to look at the most beautiful thing imaginable? Well now, daughters, your Spouse never takes His eyes off you. He has suffered your committing a thousand ugly offenses and abominations against Him, and this suffering wasn't enough for Him to cease looking at you. Is it too much to ask you to turn your eyes from these exterior things in order to look at Him sometimes? Behold, He is not waiting for anything else, as He says to the bride,² than that we look at Him. In the measure you desire Him, you will find Him. He so esteems our turning to look at Him that no diligence will be lacking on His part.

4. They say that for a woman to be a good wife toward her husband she must be sad when he is sad, and joyful when he is joyful, even though she may not be so. (See what subjection you have been freed from, Sisters!) The Lord, without deception, truly acts in such a way with us. He is the one who submits, and He wants you to be the lady with authority to rule; He submits to your will. If you are joyful, look at Him as risen. Just imagining how He rose from the tomb will bring you joy. The brilliance! The beauty! The majesty! How victorious! How joyful! Indeed, like one coming forth from a battle where he has gained a great kingdom! And all of that, plus Himself, He desires for you. Well, is it such a big thing that from time to time you turn your eyes to look upon one who gives you so much?

5. If you are experiencing trials or are sad, behold Him on the way to the garden: what great affliction He bore in His soul; for having become suffering itself, He tells us about it and complains of it. Or behold Him bound to the column, filled with pain, with all His flesh torn in pieces for the great love He bears you; so much suffering, persecuted by some, spit on by others, denied by His friends, abandoned by them, with no one to defend Him, frozen from the cold, left so alone that you can console each other. Or behold Him burdened with the cross, for they didn't even let Him take a breath. He will look at you

with those eyes so beautiful and compassionate, filled with tears; He will forget His sorrows so as to console you in yours, merely because you yourselves go to Him to be consoled, and you turn your head to look at Him.

6. O Lord of the world, my true Spouse! (You can say this to Him if He has moved your heart to pity at seeing Him thus, for not only will you desire to look at Him but you will also delight in speaking with Him, not with ready-made prayers but with those that come from the sorrow of your own heart, for He esteems them highly.) Are You so in need, my Lord and my Love, that You would want to receive such poor company as mine, for I see by Your expression that You have been consoled by me? Well then, how is it Lord that the angels leave You and that even Your Father doesn't console You? If it's true, Lord, that You want to endure everything for me, what is this that I suffer for You? Of what am I complaining? I am already ashamed, since I have seen You in such a condition. I desire to suffer, Lord, all the trials that come to me and esteem them as a great good enabling me to imitate You in something. Let us walk together, Lord. Wherever You go, I will go;³ whatever you suffer, I will suffer.

7. Take up that cross, daughters. Don't mind at all if the Jews trample upon you, if His trial can thereby be lessened. Pay no attention to what they say to you, be deaf to their gossip. In stumbling, in falling with your Spouse, do not withdraw from the cross or abandon it. Consider carefully the fatigue with which He walks and how much greater His trials are than those trials you suffer, however great you may want to paint them and no matter how much you grieve over them. You will come out consoled because you will see that they are something to be laughed at when compared to those of the Lord.

8. You will ask, Sisters, how you can do this, saying that if you had seen His Majesty with your bodily eyes at the time He walked in this world that you would have looked at Him very willingly and done so always. Don't believe it. Whoever doesn't want to use a little effort now to recollect at least the sense of sight and look at this Lord within herself (for one can do so

without danger but with just a little care) would have been much less able to stay at the foot of the cross with the Magdalene, who saw His death with her own eyes. But how much the glorious Virgin and this blessed saint must have suffered! How many threats, how many wicked words, how much shoving about and rudeness! For the people around them were not exactly what we would call courteous! No, they were people from hell, ministers of the devil. Indeed, what these two suffered must have been terrible; but in the presence of another greater affliction they didn't feel their own.

So, Sisters, don't think you are capable of such great trials if you are not capable of such little ones. By exercising yourselves in these little trials, you will come to be able to suffer other greater ones. [And believe that I am speaking the truth in saying that you can speak with Him, for I have passed through this difficulty.]

9. What you can do as a help in this matter is try to carry about an image or painting of this Lord that is to your liking, not so as to carry it about on your heart and never look at it but so as to speak often with Him; for He will inspire you with what to say. Since you speak with other persons, why must words fail you more when you speak with God? Don't believe they will; at least I will not believe they will if you acquire the habit. Otherwise, the failure to communicate with a person causes both estrangement and a failure to know how to speak with him. For it seems then that we don't know him, even if he may be a relative; family ties and friendship are lost through a lack of communication.

10. It is also a great help to take a good book written in the vernacular in order to recollect one's thoughts and pray well vocally, and little by little accustom the soul with coaxing and skill not to grow discouraged. Imagine that many years have passed since the soul left the house of its Spouse and that until it returns to this house there's a great need that it know how to deal with Him. For so we sinners are: our soul and our thoughts are so accustomed to wandering about at their own pleasure—or grief, to put it better—that the poor soul doesn't understand itself. In order that it get to love remaining at

home once again, a great deal of skill is necessary. If little by little this is not accomplished, we shall never do anything.

And I again assure you that if with care you grow accustomed to what I have said⁴ your gain will be so great that even if I wanted to explain this to you I wouldn't know how. Draw near, then, to this good Master with strong determination to learn what He teaches you, and His Majesty will so provide that you will turn out to be good disciples. He will not abandon you if you do not abandon Him. Consider the words that divine mouth speaks, for in the first word you will understand immediately the love He has for you; it is no small blessing and gift for the disciple to see that his Master loves him.

Chapter 27

Deals with the great love our Lord showed us in the first words of the Our Father and how important it is for those who truly want to be children of God to pay no attention whatsoever to lineage.

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN.¹ O my Lord, how You do show Yourself to be the Father of such a Son; and how Your Son does show Himself to be the Son of such a Father! May You be blessed forever and ever! This favor would not be so great, Lord, if it came at the end of the prayer. But at the beginning, You fill our hands and give a reward so large that it would easily fill the intellect and thus occupy the will in such a way one would be unable to speak a word.

Oh, daughters, how readily should perfect contemplation come at this point! Oh, how right it would be for the soul to enter within itself in order to rise the better above itself² that this holy Son might make it understand the nature of the place where He says His Father dwells, which is in the heavens. Let us go forth from the earth, my daughters, for there is no reason that a favor like this should be so little esteemed, that after we have understood how great it is, we should still want to remain on earth.

2. O Son of God and my Lord! How is it that You give so much all together in the first words? Since You humble Yourself to such an extreme in joining with us in prayer and making Yourself the Brother of creatures so lowly and wretched, how is it that You give us in the name of Your Father everything that can be given? For You desire that He consider us His children, because Your word cannot fail.³ You oblige Him to be true to Your word, which is no small burden since in being Father He must bear with us no matter how serious the offenses. If we return to Him like the prodigal son, He has to pardon us.⁴ He has to console us in our trials. He has to sustain us in the way a father like this must. For, in effect, He must be better than all the fathers in the world because in Him everything must be faultless. And after all this He must make us sharers and heirs with You.⁵

3. Behold, my Lord, that since with the love You bear us and with Your humility, nothing will stop you . . . in sum, Lord, You are on earth and clothed with it. Since You possess our nature, it seems You have some reason to look to our gain. But behold, Your Father is in heaven. You Yourself said so. It is right that You look to His honor. Since You have vowed to undergo disgrace for us, leave Your Father free. Don't oblige Him to do so much for a people so wretched, like myself, who will not thank You properly [and there are no others who will do better.]

4. O good Jesus! How clearly You have shown that You are one with Him, and that Your will is His and His, Yours!⁶ How clear your declaration, my Lord! How magnificent it is, the love You bear us! You made use of roundabout ways, hiding from the devil the fact that You are the Son of God; and with the great desire You have for our good, nothing was able to stop You from granting us so very great a favor. Who could have done it but You, Lord? I don't know how the devil failed to understand in these words who You were, and had doubts about it. At least I see it clearly, my Jesus. You have spoken, as a favored son, for Yourself and for us; and You are powerful enough so that what You say on earth will be done in heaven.

May You be blessed forever, my Lord, for You are so willing to give that nothing will stop You from doing so.

5. Well, daughters, doesn't it seem to you that this Master is a good one, since in order to make us grow fond of learning what He teaches us He begins by granting us so wonderful a favor? Does it seem right to you now that even though we recite these first words vocally we should fail to let our intellects understand and our hearts break in pieces at seeing such love? What son is there in the world who doesn't strive to learn who his father is when he knows he has such a good one with so much majesty and power? If our Father had not so much majesty, it wouldn't surprise me if we refused to be known as His children. The world has come to such a state that if the father is of a lower status than his son, the son doesn't feel honored in recognizing him as his father.

6. Such an attitude doesn't belong here. In this house, please God, may there never be any thought about such a thing; it would be a hell. But the one who is from nobler lineage should be the one to speak least about her father. All the Sisters must be equal.

O college of Christ, where St. Peter, being a fisherman, had more authority—and the Lord wanted it so—than St. Bartholomew, who was a king's son!⁷ His Majesty knew what would take place in the world where people dispute over lineage. These disputes in reality amount to nothing much more than a debate about whether the mud is better for making bricks or adobes. God help me, what a great trial we bear! God deliver us, Sisters, from similar disputes, even though they be in jest; I hope in His Majesty that He will do so. When this concern about lineage is noticed in a Sister, apply a remedy at once and let her fear lest she be Judas among the apostles. Give her penances until she understands that she doesn't deserve to be thought of as made from even a very wretched kind of mud.⁸

You have a good Father, for He gives you the good Jesus. Let no one in this house speak of any other father but Him. And strive, my daughters, so to behave that you will deserve to find your delight in Him; and cast yourselves into His arms. You

already know that He will not reject you if you are good daughters. Who, then, would fail to strive so as not to lose such a Father?

7. Oh, God help me! How much there is in these words to give you consolation. So as not to enlarge any more on this matter, I want to leave it to your own reflection. For no matter how unruly one's mind may be, the truth is — leaving aside our gain in having so good a Father — that the Holy Spirit must be present between such a Son and such a Father, and He will enkindle your will and bind it with a very great love.

Chapter 28

Explains the nature of the prayer of recollection and sets down some ways of getting accustomed to this form of prayer.

NOW CONSIDER WHAT YOUR MASTER SAYS: *Who art in heaven.*¹ Do you think it's of little importance to know what heaven is and where you must seek your most sacred Father? Well, I tell you that for wandering minds it is very important not only to believe these truths but to strive to understand them by experience. Doing this is one of the ways of greatly slowing down the mind and recollecting the soul.

2. You already know that God is everywhere. It's obvious, then, that where the king is there is his court; in sum, wherever God is, there is heaven. Without a doubt you can believe that where His Majesty is present, all glory is present. Consider what St. Augustine says, that he sought Him in many places but found Him ultimately within himself.² Do you think it matters little for a soul with a wandering mind to understand this truth and see that there is no need to go to heaven in order to speak with one's Eternal Father or find delight in Him? Nor is there any need to shout. However softly we speak, He is near enough to hear us. Neither is there any need for wings to go to find Him.³ All one need do is go into solitude and look at Him

within oneself, and not turn away from so good a Guest but with great humility speak to Him as to a father. Beseech Him as you would a father; tell Him about your trials; ask Him for a remedy against them, realizing that you are not worthy to be His daughter.

3. Leave aside any of that faintheartedness that some persons have and think is humility. You see, humility doesn't consist in refusing a favor the King offers you but in accepting such a favor and understanding how bountifully it comes to you and being delighted with it. What a nice kind of humility! I have the Emperor of heaven and earth in my house (for He comes to it in order to favor me and be happy with me), and out of humility I do not want to answer Him or stay with Him or take what He gives me, but I leave Him alone. Or, while He is telling me and begging me to ask Him for something, I do not do so but remain poor; and I even let Him go, for He sees that I never finish trying to make up my mind.

Have nothing to do with this kind of humility, daughters, but speak with Him as with a father, or a brother, or a lord, or as with a spouse; sometimes in one way, at other times in another; He will teach you what you must do in order to please Him. Don't be foolish; take Him at His word. Since He is your Spouse, He will treat you accordingly. [Consider that it is well worthwhile for you to have understood this truth: that the Lord is within us, and that there we must be with Him.]

4. The intellect is recollected much more quickly with this kind of prayer even though it may be vocal; it is a prayer that brings with it many blessings. This prayer is called "recollection," because the soul collects its faculties together and enters within itself to be with its God. And its divine Master comes more quickly to teach it and give it the prayer of quiet than He would through any other method it might use. For centered there within itself, it can think about the Passion and represent the Son and offer Him to the Father and not tire the intellect by going to look for Him on Mount Calvary or in the garden or at the pillar.

5. Those who by such a method can enclose themselves

within this little heaven of our soul, where the Maker of heaven and earth is present, and grow accustomed to refusing to be where the exterior senses in their distraction have gone or look in that direction should believe they are following an excellent path and that they will not fail to drink water from the fount; for they will journey far in a short time. Their situation is like that of a person who travels by ship; with a little wind he reaches the end of his journey in a few days. But those who go by land take longer. [It's the path of heaven. I say "of heaven," because they are there in the palace of the King; they are not on earth and are more secure against many occasions.]

6. Those who know how to recollect themselves are already out to sea, as they say. For even though they may not have got completely away from land, they do what they can during that time to get free from it by recollecting their senses within. If the recollection is true, it is felt very clearly; for it produces some effect in the soul. I don't know how to explain it. Whoever has experienced it will understand; the soul is like one who gets up from the table after winning a game, for it already sees what the things of the world are. It rises up at the best time, as one who enters a fortified castle to be safe from enemies. There is a withdrawing of the senses from exterior things and a renunciation of them in such a way that, without one's realizing it, the eyes close so as to avoid seeing them and so that the sight might be more awake to things of the soul.

So, anyone who walks by this path keeps his eyes closed almost as often as he prays. This is a praiseworthy custom for many reasons. It is a striving so as not to look at things here below. This striving comes at the beginning; afterward, there's no need to strive; a greater effort is needed to open the eyes while praying. It seems the soul is aware of being strengthened and fortified at the expense of the body, that it leaves the body alone and weakened, and that it receives in this recollection a supply of provisions to strengthen it against the body.

7. And even though it isn't aware of this at the beginning, since the recollection is not so deep—for there are greater and lesser degrees of recollection—the soul should get used to this recollection; although in the beginning the body causes dif-

ficulty because it claims its rights without realizing that it is cutting off its own head by not surrendering. If we make the effort, practice this recollection for some days, and get used to it, the gain will be clearly seen; we will understand, when beginning to pray, that the bees are approaching and entering the beehive to make honey. And this recollection will be effected without our effort because the Lord has desired that, during the time the faculties are drawn inward, the soul and its will may merit to have this dominion. When the soul does no more than give a sign that it wishes to be recollected, the senses obey it and become recollected. Even though they go out again afterward, their having already surrendered is a great thing; for they go out as captives and subjects and do not cause the harm they did previously. And when the will calls them back again, they come more quickly, until after many of these entries the Lord wills that they rest entirely in perfect contemplation.

8. May what has been said be well understood; even though it seems obscure, it will be understood by anyone who desires to practice it.

Therefore, those who know how to recollect themselves are like those who travel by sea; and since it is important for us not to proceed so slowly, let us speak a little about how we should get accustomed to a method that's so good. These souls are safer from many occasions. The fire of divine love is more quickly enkindled when they blow a little with their intellects. Since they are close to the fire, a little spark will ignite and set everything ablaze. Because there is no impediment from outside, the soul is alone with its God; it is well prepared for this enkindling. [I would like you to understand clearly this manner of prayer, which, as I have said, is called recollection.]

9. Well, let us imagine that within us is an extremely rich palace, built entirely of gold and precious stones; in sum, built for a lord such as this. Imagine, too, as is indeed so, that you have a part to play in order for the palace to be so beautiful; for there is no edifice as beautiful as is a soul pure and full of virtues. The greater the virtues the more resplendent the jewels. Imagine, also, that in this palace dwells this mighty King who has been gracious enough to become your Father;

and that He is seated upon an extremely valuable throne, which is your heart.

10. This may seem trifling at the beginning; I mean, this image I've used in order to explain recollection. But the image may be very helpful—to you especially—for since we women have no learning, all of this imagining is necessary that we may truly understand that within us lies something incomparably more precious than what we see outside ourselves. Let's not imagine that we are hollow inside. And please God it may be only women that go about forgetful of this inner richness and beauty. I consider it impossible for us to pay so much attention to worldly things if we take the care to remember we have a Guest such as this within us, for we then see how lowly these things are next to what we possess within ourselves. Well, what else does an animal do upon seeing what is pleasing to its sight than satisfy its hunger by taking the prey? Indeed, there should be some difference between them and us.

11. You will laugh at me, perhaps, and say that what I'm explaining is very clear, and you'll be right; for me, though, it was obscure for some time. I understood well that I had a soul. But what this soul deserved and who dwelt within it I did not understand because I had covered my eyes with the vanities of the world. For, in my opinion, if I had understood as I do now that in this little palace of my soul dwelt so great a King, I would not have left Him alone so often. I would have remained with Him at times and striven more so as not to be so unclean. But what a marvelous thing, that He who would fill a thousand worlds and many more with His grandeur would enclose Himself in something so small! [And so He wanted to enclose Himself in the womb of His most Blessed Mother.] In fact, since He is Lord He is free to do what He wants, and since He loves us He adapts Himself to our size.

12. So that the soul won't be disturbed in the beginning by seeing that it is too small to have something so great within itself, the Lord doesn't give it this knowledge until He enlarges it little by little and it has the capacity to receive what He will place within it. For this reason I say He is free to do what He wants since He has the power to make this palace a large one.

The whole point is that we should give ourselves to Him with complete determination, and we should empty the soul in such a way that He can store things there or take them away as though it were His own property. And since His Majesty has the rights of ownership, let us not oppose Him. [Even here below guests in the house are a bother when we cannot tell them to leave.] And since He doesn't force our will, He takes what we give Him; but He doesn't give Himself completely until we give ourselves completely.

This fact is certain; and because it is so important, I bring it to your minds so often. He never works in the soul as He does when it is totally His without any obstacle, nor do I see how He could. He is the friend of all good order. Now, then, if we fill the palace with lowly people and trifles, how will there be room for the Lord with His court? He does enough by remaining just a little while in the midst of so much confusion.

13. Do you think, daughters, that He comes alone? Don't you see that His Son says, "who art in heaven"? Well, since He is such a King, certainly His court attendants would never leave Him alone, but they will always be with Him; and they beseech Him on our behalf since they are full of charity. Don't think that things in heaven are like they are here below; for if here below a lord or prelate, because of certain of his own aims or because he wants to, favors someone, the envy of others is immediately stirred, and that poor person is hated without having done anything against them.

Chapter 29

Continues to present means for obtaining this prayer of recollection. How little it should matter to us whether or not we are favored by the bishop.

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, daughters, don't bother about being favored by lords or prelates. Let each nun strive to do what she ought; if the bishop doesn't show gratitude for what

she does, she can be sure that the Lord will repay and be grateful for it. Indeed, we have not come here to seek a reward in this life. Let us always direct our thoughts to what is lasting and pay no attention to things here below, for even though our lives are short these preferences do not last for us. Today the bishop will favor one Sister, and tomorrow he will favor you if he sees one virtue more in you; and if he doesn't favor you, it matters little. Give no room to these thoughts. Sometimes they begin in a small way, but they can become very disturbing to you. Cut them off with the thought that your kingdom is not here below and of how quickly all things come to an end.

2. But even this kind of remedy is a lowly one and not indicative of great perfection. It is better that this disfavor of your superior continue, that you be unappreciated and humbled, and that you accept this for the Lord who is with you. Turn your eyes inward and look within yourself, as has been said.¹ You will find your Master, for He will not fail you; rather, the less you have of exterior consolation the more He will favor you. He is very merciful, and He never fails persons who are afflicted and despised if they trust in Him alone. So, David says that the Lord is with the afflicted.² Either you believe this or you don't. If you believe it, then why are you killing yourselves?

3. O my Lord, if we truly knew You we wouldn't care at all about anything, for You give much to those who sincerely want to trust in You! Believe, my friends, that it is a great thing to have knowledge of this truth so that you can then see that all favors here below are a lie when they divert the soul somewhat from entering within itself. Oh, God help me, who will make you understand this! Certainly, not I; for I know that I, who more than anyone should understand, have not succeeded in understanding it as it should be understood.

4. Now to return to what I was saying.³ I would like to know a way of explaining how this holy fellowship with our Companion, the Saint of saints, may be experienced without any hindrance to the solitude enjoyed between the soul and its Spouse when the soul desires to enter this paradise within itself to be with its God and close the door to all the world. I say

“desires” because you must understand that this recollection is not something supernatural, but that it is something we can desire and achieve ourselves with the help of God – for without this help we can do nothing,⁴ not even have a good thought. This recollection is not a silence of the faculties; it is an enclosure of the faculties within the soul.

5. The soul gains from this recollection in many ways as is written in some books [on mental prayer.⁵ Since I’m speaking only of how vocal prayer should be recited well, there’s no reason to say so much. What I’m trying to point out is that we should see and be present to the One with whom we speak without turning our backs on Him, for I don’t think speaking with God while thinking of a thousand other vanities would amount to anything else but turning our backs on Him. All the harm comes from not truly understanding that He is near, but in imagining Him as far away. And indeed how far, if we go to heaven to seek Him! Now, is Your face such, Lord, that we would not look at it when You are so close to us? If people aren’t looking at us when we speak, it doesn’t seem to us that they are listening to what we say. And do we close our eyes to avoid seeing that You, Lord, are looking at us? How will we know whether You’ve heard what we’re saying to You? This alone is what I want to explain: that in order to acquire the habit of easily recollecting our minds and understanding what we are saying, and with whom we are speaking, it is necessary that the exterior senses be recollected and that we give them something with which to be occupied. For indeed we have heaven within ourselves since the Lord of heaven is there.]

We must, then, disengage ourselves from everything so as to approach God interiorly and even in the midst of occupations withdraw within ourselves. Although it may be for only a moment that I remember I have that Company within myself, doing so is very beneficial. In sum, we must get used to delighting in the fact that it isn’t necessary to shout in order to speak to Him, for His Majesty will give the experience that He is present.

6. With this method we shall pray vocally with much calm, and any difficulty will be removed. For in the little amount of

time we take to force ourselves to be close to this Lord, He will understand us as if through sign language. Thus if we are about to say the Our Father many times, He will understand us after the first. He is very fond of taking away our difficulty. Even though we may recite this prayer no more than once in an hour, we can be aware that we are with Him, of what we are asking Him, of His willingness to give to us, and how eagerly He remains with us. If we have this awareness, He doesn't want us to be breaking our heads trying to speak a great deal to Him. [Therefore, Sisters, out of love for the Lord, get used to praying the Our Father with this recollection, and you will see the benefit before long. This is a manner of praying that the soul gets so quickly used to that it doesn't go astray, nor do the faculties become restless, as time will tell. I only ask that you try this method, even though it may mean some struggle; everything involves struggle before the habit is acquired. But I assure you that before long it will be a great consolation for you to know that you can find this holy Father, whom you are beseeching, within you without tiring yourself in seeking where He is.]

7. May the Lord teach this recollection to those of you who don't know about it, for I confess that I never knew what it was to pray with satisfaction until the Lord taught me this method. And it is because I have always found so many benefits from this habit of recollection that I have enlarged so much upon it.

I conclude by saying that whoever wishes to acquire it – since, as I say, it lies within our power – should not tire of getting used to what has been explained. It involves a gradual increase of self-control and an end to vain wandering from the right path; it means conquering, which is a making use of one's senses for the sake of the inner life. If you speak, strive to remember that the One with whom you are speaking is present within. If you listen, remember that you are going to hear One who is very close to you when He speaks. In sum, bear in mind that you can, if you want, avoid ever withdrawing from such good company; and be sorry that for a long time you left your Father alone, of whom you are so much in need. If you can, practice this recollection often during the day; if not, do so a

few times. As you become accustomed to it you will experience the benefit, either sooner or later. Once this recollection is given by the Lord, you will not exchange it for any treasure.

8. Since nothing is learned without a little effort, consider, Sisters, for the love of God, as well employed the attention you give to this method of prayer. I know, if you try, that within a year, or perhaps half a year, you will acquire it, by the favor of God. See how little time it takes for a gain as great as is that of laying a good foundation. If then the Lord should desire to raise you to higher things He will discover in you the readiness, finding that you are close to Him. May it please His Majesty that we not consent to withdrawing from His presence. Amen. [Perhaps all of you know what I've explained, but someone may come along who will not know it. For that reason don't be annoyed that I've mentioned it here. Now let us come to learn how our good Master continues and begins to petition His holy Father for us; it is good that we understand what He asks.]

Chapter 30

The importance of understanding what is being asked for in prayer. Deals with the next words of the Our Father: Sanctificetur nomen tuum, adveniat regnum tuum. Applies these words to the prayer of quiet and begins to explain this kind of prayer.

IS THERE ANYONE, however foolish, who when he is about to ask for something from an important person doesn't think over how he should go about asking? He must find favor with this person and not seem rude. He thinks about what he should ask for and why he needs it, especially if he is asking for something significant, which is what our good Jesus teaches us to ask for. There is something it seems to me that should be noted: Couldn't You, my Lord, have concluded the Our Father with the words: "Give us, Father, what is fitting for us"? It doesn't seem there would have been need to say anything else to One who understands everything so well.

2. O Eternal Wisdom! Between You and Your Father these words would have sufficed. Your petition in the garden was like this. You manifested Your own desire and fear, but You abandoned them to His will.¹ Yet, You know us, my Lord, that we are not as surrendered to the will of Your Father as You were. You know that it was necessary for You to make those specific requests so that we might pause to consider if what we are seeking is good for us, so that if it isn't we won't ask for it. If we aren't given what we want, being what we are, with this free will we have, we might not accept what the Lord gives. For although what He gives is better, we don't think we'll ever become rich, since we don't at once see the money in our hand.

3. Oh, God help me! What a pity to have so unawakened a faith that we never come to understand fully the certainty of both punishment and reward! As a result it is good, daughters, that you understand what you are asking for in the Our Father so that if the Eternal Father should offer it to you, you will not scoff at it. And consider very carefully whether what you ask for is good for you; if it isn't, don't ask for it, but ask His Majesty to give you light. For we are blind and feel loathing for the food that will give us life; we want the food that will bring us death. And what a death! So dangerous and so everlasting!

4. Well, Jesus says that we may recite these words in which we ask for a kingdom like His to come within us: "Hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come within us."²

Now behold, daughters, how great the wisdom of our Master is. I am reflecting here on what we are asking for when we ask for this kingdom, and it is good that we understand our request. But since His Majesty saw that we could neither hallow, nor praise, nor extol, nor glorify this holy name of the Eternal Father in a fitting way, because of the tiny amount we ourselves are capable of doing, He provided for us by giving us here on earth His kingdom. That is why Jesus put these two petitions next to each other. I want to tell you here, daughters, what I understand so that we may know what we are asking for and the importance of our begging persistently for it, and do as much as we can so as to please the One who is to give it to us. If I do not satisfy you, you can think up other reflections

yourselves. Our Master will allow us to make these reflections provided that we submit in all things to what the Church³ holds, as I do [always. And I will not even give you this to read until learned persons have seen it. At least, if there is anything incorrect, the error will not be done through malice but for my not knowing any better.]

5. Now, then, the great good that it seems to me there will be in the kingdom of heaven, among many other blessings, is that one will no longer take any account of earthly things, but have a calmness and glory within, rejoice in the fact that all are rejoicing, experience perpetual peace and a wonderful inner satisfaction that comes from seeing that everyone hallows and praises the Lord and blesses His name and that no one offends Him. Everyone loves Him there, and the soul itself doesn't think about anything else than loving Him; nor can it cease loving Him, because it knows Him. And would that we could love Him in this way here below, even though we may not be able to do so with such perfection or stability. But if we knew Him we would love in a way very different from that in which we do love Him.

6. It seems I'm saying that we would have to be angels in order to make this petition and recite well our vocal prayers. Our divine Master would truly desire this since He asks us to make so lofty a petition, and certainly He doesn't tell us to ask for impossible things. The above would be possible, through the favor of God, for a soul placed in this exile, but not with the perfection of those who have gone forth from this prison; for we are at sea and journeying along this way. But there are times when, tired from our travels, we experience that the Lord calms our faculties and quiets the soul. As though by signs, He gives us a clear foretaste of what will be given to those He brings to His kingdom. And to those to whom He gives here below the kingdom we ask for, He gives pledges so that through these they may have great hope of going to enjoy perpetually what here on earth is given only in sips.

7. If you wouldn't say that I'm treating of contemplation, this petition would provide a good opportunity for speaking a little about the beginning of pure contemplation; those who ex-

perience this prayer call it the prayer of quiet. But since, as I say, I'm dealing with vocal prayer, it may seem to anyone who doesn't know about the matter that vocal prayer doesn't go with contemplation; but I know that it does. Pardon me, but I want to say this: I know there are many persons who while praying vocally, as has already been mentioned,⁴ are raised by God to sublime contemplation [without their striving for anything or understanding how. It's because of this that I insist so much, daughters, upon your reciting vocal prayer well.] I know a person⁵ who was never able to pray any way but vocally, and though she was tied to this form of prayer she experienced everything else. And if she didn't recite vocal prayer her mind wandered so much that she couldn't bear it. Would that our mental prayer were as good! She spent several hours reciting a certain number of Our Fathers, in memory of the times our Lord shed His blood, as well as a few other vocal prayers. Once she came to me very afflicted because she didn't know how to practice mental prayer nor could she contemplate; she could only pray vocally. I asked her how she was praying, and I saw that though she was tied to the Our Father she experienced pure contemplation and that the Lord was raising her up and joining her with Himself in union. And from her deeds it seemed truly that she was receiving such great favors, for she was living a very good life. So I praised the Lord and envied her for her vocal prayer.

If this account is true, as it is, those of you who are the enemies of contemplatives should not think that you are free from being a contemplative if you recite your vocal prayers as they should be recited, with a pure conscience. [And so I will speak of this again. Whoever doesn't want to hear it may pass on.]

Chapter 31

Continues on the same subject. Explains the nature of the prayer of quiet. Gives some advice for those who experience it. This chapter should be carefully noted.

WELL, DAUGHTERS, I NONETHELESS want to explain this prayer of quiet. I have heard talk about it, or the Lord has given me understanding of it, perhaps, that I might tell you of it [and that others may praise Him; although since I have written about it elsewhere, as I said, I will not give lengthy explanations but just say something.] In this prayer it seems the Lord begins, as I have said,¹ to show that He hears our petition. He begins now to give us His kingdom here below so that we may truly praise and hallow His name and strive that all persons do so.

2. This prayer is something supernatural, something we cannot procure through our own efforts. In it the soul enters into peace or, better, the Lord puts it at peace by His presence, as He did to the just Simeon,² so that all the faculties are calmed. The soul understands in another way, very foreign to the way it understands through the exterior senses, that it is now close to its God and that not much more would be required for it to become one with Him in union. This is not because it sees Him with the eyes either of the body or of the soul. The just Simeon didn't see any more than the glorious, little, poor child. For by the way the child was clothed and by the few people that were in the procession, Simeon could have easily judged the babe to be the son of poor people rather than the Son of our heavenly Father. But the child Himself made Simeon understand. And this is how the soul understands here, although not with as much clarity. For the soul, likewise, fails to understand how it understands. But it sees it is in the kingdom, at least near the King who will give the kingdom to the soul. And seemingly the soul has so much reverence that it doesn't even dare ask for this. The state resembles an interior and exterior swoon; for the exterior man (or so that you will understand me better, I mean the body [for some simpleton will come along who won't know what "interior" and "exterior" means])

doesn't want any activity. But like one who has almost reached the end of his journey he wants to rest so as to be better able to continue; in this rest his strength for the journey is doubled.

3. A person feels the greatest delight in his body and a great satisfaction in his soul. He feels so happy merely with being close to the fount that he is satisfied even without drinking. It doesn't seem there is anything else for him to desire. The faculties are still; they wouldn't want to be busy; everything else seems to hinder them from loving. But they are not completely lost; they can think of who it is they are near, for two of them are free. The will is the one that is captive here. If there is some sorrow that can be experienced while in this state, that sorrow comes from a realization that the will must return to the state of being free. The intellect wouldn't want to understand more than one thing; nor would the memory want to be occupied with anything else. Persons in this prayer see that only this one thing is necessary, and everything else disturbs them. They don't want the body to move because it seems they would thereby lose that peace; thus they don't dare stir. It pains them to speak; in their saying "Our Father" just once a whole hour passes. They are so close that they see they are understanding as though through signs. They are within the palace, near the King, and they see that He is beginning to give them here His kingdom. It doesn't seem to them that they are in the world, nor would they want to see or hear about anything other than their God. Nothing pains them, nor does it seem anything ever will. In sum, while this prayer lasts they are so absorbed and engulfed with the satisfaction and delight they experience within themselves that they do not remember there is more to desire; they would eagerly say with St. Peter: "Lord, let us build three dwelling places here."³

4. Sometimes in this prayer of quiet the Lord grants another favor which is very difficult to understand if there is not a great deal of experience. But if there is some experience, the one who receives it will immediately understand. It will be a great consolation for you to know what it is, and I believe God often grants this favor together with the other one. When this quiet is great and lasts for a long while, it seems to me that the will

wouldn't be able to remain so long in that peace if it weren't bound to something. For it may happen that we will go about with this satisfaction for a day or two and will not understand ourselves — I mean those who experience it — and they definitely see that they are not wholly in what they are doing, but that the best part is lacking, that is, the will. The will, in my opinion, is then united with its God, and leaves the other faculties free to be occupied in what is for His service — and they then have much more ability for this. But in worldly matters, these faculties are dull and at times as though in a stupor.

5. This is a great favor for those to whom the Lord grants it; the active and the contemplative lives are joined. The faculties all serve the Lord together: the will is occupied in its work and contemplation without knowing how; the other two faculties serve in the work of Martha. Thus Martha and Mary walk together.

I know someone whom the Lord often placed in this state. She didn't know what to make of it and asked a great contemplative. He answered that the experience was very possible, that it had happened to him.⁴ Thus, I think that because the soul is so satisfied in this prayer of quiet the faculty of the will remains more continually united with Him who alone can satisfy it.

6. I think it would be good here to give some counsels for those of you, Sisters, whom the Lord, solely through His goodness, has brought here, for I know there are some of you.

The first is that since they see themselves in that contentment and do not know how it came on them — at least they see they cannot obtain it by themselves — they experience this temptation: they think they'll be able to hold on to that satisfaction and they don't even dare take a breath. This is foolish, for just as there's nothing we can do to make the sun rise, there's little we can do to keep it from setting. This prayer is no longer our work, for it's something very supernatural and something very much beyond our power to acquire by ourselves. The best way to hold on to this favor is to understand clearly that we can neither bring it about nor remove it; we can

only receive it with gratitude, as most unworthy of it; and this not with many words, but by raising our eyes to Him, as the publican did.⁵

7. It is good to find more solitude so as to make room for the Lord and allow His Majesty to work as though with something belonging to Him. At most, a gentle word from time to time is sufficient, as in the case of one who blows on a candle to enkindle it again when it begins to die out. But if the candle is burning, blowing on it will in my opinion serve no other purpose than to put it out. I say that the blowing should be gentle lest the will be distracted by the intellect busying itself with many words.

8. And note well, friends, this counsel that I now wish to give, for you'll often see that you'll be unable to manage these other two faculties.⁶ It happens that the soul will be in the greatest quiet and the intellect will be so distracted that it won't seem that the quiet is present in the intellect's house. It seems to the intellect, during that time, that it is nowhere else than in a stranger's house, as a guest, and seeking other dwelling places because the house it's in doesn't satisfy it and it knows little about how to remain stable. Perhaps it's only my intellect that's like this, and others' intellects are not. I am speaking about myself, for sometimes I want to die in that I cannot cure this wandering of the intellect. At other times I think it takes up residence in its own house and accompanies the will. It's a wonderful thing when all three faculties are in accord. It's like what happens between two married people: if they love each other, the one wants what the other wants. But if the husband is unhappily married, it's easy to see what disturbance he'll cause his wife. Thus when the will finds itself in this quiet [and note well this counsel, for the matter is important], it shouldn't pay any more attention to the intellect than it would to a madman. For should it want to keep the intellect near itself, it will necessarily have to be somewhat disturbed and disquieted. And in this state of prayer everything will then amount to working without any further gain but with a loss of what the Lord was giving the will without its own work.

9. And notice carefully this comparison [for the Lord put it in my mind while I was at prayer]; it seems to me very ap-

propriate: the soul is like an infant that still nurses when at its mother's breast, and the mother without her babe's effort to suckle puts the milk in its mouth in order to give it delight. So it is here; for without effort of the intellect the will is loving, and the Lord desires that the will, without thinking about the matter, understand that it is with Him and that it does no more than swallow the milk His Majesty places in its mouth, and enjoy that sweetness. For the will knows that it is the Lord who is granting that favor. And the will rejoices in its enjoyment. It doesn't desire to understand how it enjoys the favor or what it enjoys; but it forgets itself during that time, for the One who is near it will not forget to observe what is fitting for it. If the will goes out to fight with the intellect so as to give a share of the experience, by drawing the intellect after itself, it cannot do so at all; it will be forced to let the milk fall from its mouth and lose that divine nourishment.

10. This is the way this prayer of quiet is different from that prayer in which the entire soul is united with God, for then the soul doesn't even go through the process of swallowing this divine food. Without its understanding how, the Lord places the milk within it. In this prayer of quiet it seems that He wants it to work a little, although so gently that it almost doesn't feel its effort. [Whoever experiences this prayer will understand clearly what I'm saying if after having read this he reflects on it carefully; and let him consider how important the matter is. If he doesn't experience the prayer, this will seem like gibberish.] That which torments the will is the intellect. The intellect doesn't cause this torment when there is union of all three faculties, for He who created them suspends them. With the joy He gives them He keeps them all occupied without their knowing or understanding how. Thus, as I say, they feel this prayer within themselves, a quiet and great contentment of the will, without being able to discern what it is specifically. Yet the soul easily discerns that it is far different from earthly satisfactions and that ruling the world with all its delights wouldn't be enough to make the soul feel that delight within itself. The delight is in the interior of the will, for the other consolations of life, it seems to me, are enjoyed in the exterior of the will, as in the outer bark, we might say. When the will

sees itself in this degree of prayer so sublime (for the prayer is, as I have already said,⁷ very recognizably supernatural), it laughs at the intellect as at a fool when this intellect—or mind, to explain myself better—goes off to the more foolish things of the world. The will remains in its quietude, for the intellect will come and go. In this prayer the will is the ruler and the powerful one. It will draw the intellect after itself without your being disturbed. And if the will should desire to draw the intellect by force of arms, the strength it has against the intellect will be lost. This strength comes from eating and receiving that divine food. And neither the will nor the intellect will gain anything, but both will lose. As the saying goes, whoever tries to grasp too much loses everything; this it seems to me is what will happen here. Experience will enable one to understand, for I wouldn't be surprised if to anyone who doesn't have this experience what I've said would seem very obscure and unnecessary. But I've already mentioned⁸ that with a little experience one will understand it, be able to benefit from it, and will praise the Lord because He was pleased that I managed to explain it here.

11. Now, then, let's conclude by saying that to the soul placed in this prayer it seems the Eternal Father has already here below granted its petition for His kingdom. Oh, blessed request, in which, without realizing it, we ask for so much good! What a blessed way of asking! For this reason, Sisters, I want us to look at how we recite this prayer, the Our Father, and all other vocal prayers. For when this favor is granted by God, we shall forget the things of the world; when the Lord of the world arrives He casts out everything else. I don't say that all those who experience this prayer must by necessity be completely detached from the world. At least, I would like them to know what is lacking and that they humble themselves and try to go on detaching themselves from everything; if they don't, they will remain in this state. A soul to whom God gives such pledges has a sign that He wants to give it a great deal; if not impeded through its own fault, it will advance very far. But if the Lord sees that after He places the kingdom of heaven in the soul's house this soul turns to earthly things, He will not only fail to

show it the secrets there are in His kingdom but will seldom grant it this favor, and then for just a short space of time.

12. Now it could be that I am mistaken in this matter, but I see and know that this is what happens, and in my opinion this is why there are not many more spiritual persons. When individuals do not respond by service that is in conformity with so great a favor, when they do not prepare themselves to receive it again, but take back their wills from the hands of the Lord who already possesses these wills as His own, and set them upon base things, the Lord goes in search of those who do love Him so as to give more to them. Yet He doesn't take away entirely what He has given, when one lives with a pure conscience. But there are persons—and I have been one of them—who make themselves deaf when the Lord, taking pity on them, gives them holy inspirations and light concerning the nature of things, and, in sum, gives this kingdom and places them in this prayer of quiet. For they are so fond of speaking and reciting many vocal prayers very quickly, like one who wants to get a job done, since they oblige themselves to recite these every day, that even though, as I say, the Lord places His kingdom in their hands, they do not receive it. But with their vocal prayers they think they are doing better, and they distract themselves from the prayer of quiet.

13. Do not do this, Sisters, but be on your guard when the Lord grants you this favor. Consider that you are losing a great treasure and that you do much more by saying one word of the Our Father from time to time than by rushing through the entire prayer many times. You are very close to the One you petition; He will not fail to hear you. And believe that herein lies the true praise and hallowing of His name. For now, as one who is in His house, you glorify the Lord and praise Him with more affection and desire; and it seems that you cannot fail to serve Him. [Thus I counsel you to be very careful in this matter because it is extremely important.]

Chapter 32

Discusses the words of the Our Father, Fiat voluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra; the great deal a person does when he says them with full determination; and how well the Lord repays this. [So I counsel you to be attentive because the matter is very important.]

NOW THAT OUR GOOD MASTER has asked, and taught us to ask, for something so highly valuable that it includes everything we can desire here below and that He has granted us so wonderful a favor as to make us His brothers, let us see what He desires us to give His Father, and how He offers this gift for us and what He asks of us. For it is right that we somehow serve Him in return for such great favors. O good Jesus! What You give on our behalf in return for what You requested for us is no small thing, although it really amounts to nothing when compared to the greatness of the Lord and what we owe Him. But certainly, my Lord, You do not leave us empty-handed when we give You everything we can—I mean if we really give it, as we say we will.

2. “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” You did well, good Master of ours, to make this petition so that we might accomplish what You give on our behalf. For certainly, Lord, if You hadn’t made the petition, the task would seem to me impossible. But when Your Father does what You ask Him by giving us His kingdom here on earth, I know that we shall make Your words come true by giving what You give for us. For once the earth has become heaven, the possibility is there for Your will to be done in me. But if the earth hasn’t—and earth as wretched and barren as mine—I don’t know, Lord, how it will be possible. It is indeed a great thing, that which You offer!

3. When I think of this, I am amused by persons who don’t dare ask for trials from the Lord, for they suppose that in doing so they will be given them at once. I’m not speaking of those who fail to do so out of humility, thinking they will be incapable of suffering them; although I myself hold that He, who gives these persons the love to ask for these means, which are so

harsh, in order that they may show their love, will give them the capacity to suffer them. I would like to question those who fear to ask for trials, lest these be given them at once, about what they say when they beseech the Lord to do His will in them. Perhaps they say the words just to say what everyone else is saying but not so that His will be done. To do this, Sisters, would not be right. Consider that Jesus acts here as our ambassador and that He has desired to intervene between us and His Father, and at no small cost of His own. It would not be right for us to fail to do what He has offered on our behalf; if we don't want to do it we shouldn't say these words.

4. Now let me put it in another way. Look, daughters, His will must be done whether we like this or not, and it will be done in heaven and on earth. Believe me, take my advice, and make a virtue of necessity. O my Lord, what a great comfort this is for me, that you didn't want the fulfillment of Your will to depend on a will as wretched as mine! May You be blessed forever, and may all things praise You! Your name be glorified forever! I'd be in a fine state, Lord, if it were up to me as to whether or not Your will were to be done! Now I freely give mine to You, even though I do so at a time in which I'm not free of self-interest. For I have felt and have had great experience of the gain that comes from freely abandoning my will to Yours. O friends, what a great gain there is here! Oh, what a great loss there is when we do not carry out what we offer to the Lord in the Our Father!

5. Before I tell you about what is gained, I want to explain the great deal you offer so that afterward you won't take back what you gave, claiming that you hadn't understood. Don't be like some religious who do nothing but promise; and when we don't follow through, we make an excuse saying we didn't understand what we were promising. And this could be so, because to say that we abandon our will to another's will seems very easy until through experience we realize that this is the hardest thing one can do if one does it as it should be done. But superiors are not always strict in leading us since they see we are weak. And at times they lead both the weak and the strong in the same way. With the Lord, such is not the case; He knows

what each one can suffer. He does not delay in doing His will in anyone He sees has strength.¹

6. Well, I want to advise you and remind you what His will is. Don't fear that it means He will give you riches, or delights, or honors, or all these earthly things. His love for you is not that small, and He esteems highly what you give Him. He wants to repay you well, for He gives you His kingdom while you are still alive. Do you want to know how He answers those who say these words to Him sincerely? Ask His glorious Son, who said them while praying in the Garden.² Since they were said with such determination and complete willingness, see if the Father's will wasn't done fully in Him through the trials, sorrows, injuries, and persecutions He suffered until His life came to an end through death on a cross.

7. Well, see here, daughters, what He gave to the one He loved most. By that we understand what His will is. For these are His gifts in this world. He gives according to the love He bears us: to those He loves more, He gives more of these gifts; to those He loves less, He gives less. And He gives according to the courage He sees in each and the love each has for His Majesty. He will see that whoever loves Him much will be able to suffer much for Him; whoever loves Him little will be capable of little. I myself hold that the measure for being able to bear a large or small cross is love. So, Sisters, if you love Him, strive that what you say to the Lord may not amount to mere polite words; strive to suffer what His Majesty desires you to suffer. For, otherwise, when you give your will, it would be like showing a jewel to another, making a gesture to give it away, and asking that he take it; but when he extends his hand to accept it, you pull yours back and hold on tightly to the jewel.

8. This is no way to mock Him who was the butt of so much mockery for our sakes. Even if there were no other reason, it would not be right to mock Him so often; the number of times we say the Our Father is not small. Let's give Him the jewel once and for all, no matter how many times we have tried to give it before. The truth is that He rewards us beforehand so that we might give it to Him. [Oh, God help me, how obvious it is that my good Jesus knows us! For He doesn't say at the outset

that we should give this will to the Lord, but first reveals that we will be well paid for this little service and that the Lord wants us to benefit a great deal by it. Even in this life He begins to reward us, as I shall now say.] Those in the world will be doing enough if they truly have the determination to do His will. You, daughters, will express this determination by both saying and doing, by both words and deeds, as indeed it seems we religious do. But at times we not only commit ourselves to giving the jewel but place it in His hand, only to take it back again. We are quick to be generous, but afterward so stingy that it would have been more fruitful, in part, if we had delayed in giving.

9. Because everything I have advised you about in this book is directed toward the complete gift of ourselves to the Creator, the surrender of our wills to His, and detachment from creatures—and you have understood how important this is—I'm not going to say any more about the matter; but I will explain why our good Master teaches us to say the words mentioned above, as one who knows the many things we gain by rendering this service to His eternal Father. For we are preparing ourselves that we may quickly reach the end of our journey and drink the living water from the fount we mentioned.³ Unless we give our wills entirely to the Lord so that in everything pertaining to us He might do what conforms with His will, we will never be allowed to drink from this fount. Drinking from it is perfect contemplation, that which you told me to write about.

10. In this contemplation, as I have already written,⁴ we don't do anything ourselves. Neither do we labor, nor do we bargain, nor is anything else necessary—because everything else is an impediment and hindrance—than to say *fiat voluntas tua*: Your will, Lord, be done in me in every way and manner that You, my Lord, want. If You want it to be done with trials, strengthen me and let them come; if with persecutions, illnesses, dishonors, and a lack of life's necessities, here I am; I will not turn away, my Father, nor is it right that I turn my back on You. Since Your Son gave You this will of mine in the name of all, there's no reason for any lack on my part. But

grant me the favor of Your kingdom that I may do Your will, since He asked for this kingdom for me, and use me as You would Your own possession, in conformity with Your will.

11. O my Sisters, what strength lies in this gift! It does nothing less, when accompanied by the necessary determination, than draw the Almighty so that He becomes one with our lowliness, transforms us into Himself, and effects a union of the Creator with the creature. Behold whether or not you are well paid and have a good Master; since He knows how the love of His Father can be obtained, He teaches us how and by what means we must serve Him.

12. And the more our deeds show that these are not merely polite words, all the more does the Lord bring us to Himself and raise the soul from itself and all earthly things so as to make it capable of receiving great favors, for He never finishes repaying this service in the present life. He esteems it so highly that we do not ourselves know how to ask for ourselves, and His Majesty never tires of giving. Not content with having made this soul one with Himself, He begins to find His delight in it, reveal His secrets, and rejoice that it knows what it has gained and something of what He will give it. He makes it lose these exterior senses so that nothing will occupy it. This is rapture. And He begins to commune with the soul in so intimate a friendship that He not only gives it back its own will but gives it His. For in so great a friendship the Lord takes joy in putting the soul in command, as they say, and He does what it asks since it does His will. And He does this even better than the soul itself could, for He is powerful and does whatever He wants and never stops wanting this.

13. The poor soul cannot do what it desires even though it may want to; nor can it give anything save what is given. This is its greatest wealth: the more it serves, the more indebted it remains. It often grows weary seeing itself subject to so many difficulties, impediments, and fetters, which result from dwelling in the prison of this body. It would want to repay something of what it owes. To grow weary is quite foolish; for even though one does what's in one's power, what can those of us repay who, as I say, don't have anything save what we have received? All

we can do is know ourselves and what we are capable of, which is to give our will, and give it completely. Everything else encumbers the soul brought here by the Lord and causes it harm rather than benefit. Only humility can do something, a humility not acquired by the intellect, but by a clear perception that comprehends in a moment the truth one would be unable to grasp in a long time through the work of the imagination about what a trifle we are and how very great God is.

14. I give you one counsel: that you don't think that through your own strength or efforts you can arrive, for reaching this stage is beyond our power; if you try to reach it, the devotion you have will grow cold. But with simplicity and humility, which will achieve everything, say: *fiat voluntas tua*.

Chapter 33

Deals with the great need we have that the Lord give us what we ask for in these words of the Our Father: Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie.

AS I HAVE SAID,¹ Jesus understands what a difficult thing it is He offers for us. He knows our weakness, that we often show we do not understand what the Lord's will is. We are weak and He is merciful. He knows that a means was necessary. He saw it would not be in any way to our benefit if we failed to give what He gave, because all our gain lies in giving this. He saw that doing the Father's will was difficult. If we tell a rich person living in luxury that it is God's will that he be careful and use moderation at table so that others might at least have bread to eat, for they are dying of hunger, he will bring up a thousand reasons for not understanding this save in accordance with his own selfish purposes. If we tell a backbiter that it is God's will that he love his neighbor as himself, he will become impatient and no reason will suffice to make him understand. We can tell a religious who has grown accustomed to freedom and comfort that he should remember his obligation to give good example and keep in mind that when he says

these words they be not just words but be put into practice since he has promised them under oath; and that it is God's will that he be faithful to his vows and that he should note that if he gives scandal he is acting very contrary to them, even though he may not be breaking them entirely; and that since he has promised poverty, he should observe it without subterfuge, for this is what the Lord wills. But it is just useless to insist nowadays with some of them. What would happen if the Lord had not provided for us with the remedy He gave? There would have been only a very few who would have carried out these words He spoke for us to the Father, *fiat voluntas tua*.

Now then, once Jesus saw the need, He sought out a wonderful means by which to show the extreme of His love for us, and in His own name and in that of His brothers He made the following petition: "Give us this day, Lord, our daily bread."

Let us understand, Sisters, for the love of God, what our good Master is asking for; it is a matter of life and death not to pass over these words hastily. Consider what you have given as very little since you will receive so much.

2. Now I think — unless one has a better opinion — that Jesus observed what He had given for us, how important it was that we in turn give this, and the great difficulty there is in our doing so, as was said,² since we are the way we are: inclined to base things and with so little love and courage that it was necessary for us to see His love and courage in order to be awakened — and not just once but every day. After He saw all this, He must have resolved to remain with us here below. Since to do this was something so serious and important, He desired that it come from the hand of the Eternal Father. For even though they are one and He knew that what He did on earth God would do in heaven and consider good — since His will and that of His Father were one — the humility of Jesus was such that He wanted, as it were, to ask permission. He already knew that His Father loved Him and took His delight in Him.³ He well understood that He was asking for more in this request than He was in the others, for He knew beforehand the death they would make Him die and the dishonors and insults He would suffer.

3. Well, what father could there be, Lord, who in having given us his son, and a son like this who receives such treatment, would consent that he remain among us every day to suffer? Certainly no father, Lord, but Yours. You well know whom You are petitioning.

Oh, God help me, what great love from the Son and what great love from the Father! Yet I am not so surprised about Jesus, for since He had already said, *fiat voluntas tua*, He had to do that will, being who He is. Yes, for He is not like us! Since, then, He knows that He does it by loving us as Himself, He went about looking for ways of doing it with greater perfection, even though His fulfillment of this commandment was at a cost to Himself. But You, Eternal Father, how is it that You consented? Why do You desire to see Your Son every day in such wretched hands? Since You have already desired to see Him in these hands and given Your consent, You have seen how they treated Him. How can You in Your compassion now see Him insulted day after day? And how many insults will be committed today against this Most Blessed Sacrament! In how many enemies' hands must the Father see Him! How much irreverence from these heretics!

4. O eternal Lord! Why do You accept such a petition? Why do You consent to it? Don't look at His love for us, because in exchange for doing Your will perfectly, and doing it for us, He allows Himself to be crushed to pieces each day. It is for You, my Lord, to look after Him, since He will let nothing deter Him. Why must all our good come at His expense? Why does He remain silent before all and not know how to speak for Himself, but only for us? Well, shouldn't there be someone to speak for this most loving Lamb? [Allow me, Lord, to speak—since You have willed to leave Him to our power—and to beseech You since He so truly obeyed You and with so much love gave Himself to us.] I have noticed how in this petition alone He repeats the words: first He says and asks the Father to give us this daily bread, and then repeats, “give it to us this day, Lord,” invoking the Father again.⁴ It's as though Jesus tells the Father that He is now ours since the Father has given Him to us to die for us; and asks that the Father not take Him

from us until the end of the world; that He allow Him to serve each day. May this move your hearts, my daughters, to love your Spouse, for there is no slave who would willingly say he is a slave, and yet it seems that Jesus is honored to be one.

5. O Eternal Father! How much this humility deserves! What treasure do we have that could buy Your Son? The sale of Him, we already know, was for thirty pieces of silver.⁵ But to buy Him, no price is sufficient. Since by sharing in our nature He has become one with us here below—and as Lord of His own will—He reminds the Father that because He belongs to Him the Father in turn can give Him to us. And so He says, “our bread.” He doesn’t make any difference between Himself and us, but we make one by not giving ourselves up each day for His Majesty.

Chapter 34

Continues on the same subject. The matter is very helpful with regard to the time immediately following reception of the most Blessed Sacrament.

IN THIS PETITION THE WORD “DAILY” seems to mean forever. Reflecting upon why after the word “daily” the Lord said “give us this day, Lord,” that is, be ours every day, I’ve come to think that it is because here on earth we possess Him and also in heaven we will possess Him if we profit well by His company.¹ He, in fact, doesn’t remain with us for any other reason than to help, encourage, and sustain us in doing this will that we have prayed might be done in us.

2. In saying “this day,” it seems to me, He is referring to one day: that which lasts as long as the world and no longer. And one day indeed! With regard to the unfortunate ones who will be condemned (who will not enjoy Him in the next life), it will not be the Lord’s fault if they let themselves be conquered.² He doesn’t stop encouraging them until the battle is over. They will have no excuse or complaint to make to the Father for tak-

ing Him away when they most need Him. So the Son tells His Father that because there is no more than one day the Father should let Him pass it in servitude. Since the Father has already given us His Son and, just because He wanted to, sent Him into the world, the Son, just because He wants to, desires not to abandon us but to remain here with us, to the greater glory of His friends and the affliction of His enemies. He asks again for no more than to be with us this day only, because it is a fact that He has given us this most sacred bread forever. His Majesty gave us, as I have said, the manna and nourishment of His humanity that we might find Him at will and not die of hunger,³ save through our own fault. In no matter how many ways the soul may desire to eat, it will find delight and consolation in the most Blessed Sacrament. [I don't want to think the Lord had in mind the other bread that is used for our bodily needs and nourishment; nor would I want you to have that in mind. The Lord was in the most sublime contemplation (for whoever has reached such a stage has no more remembrance that he is in the world than if he were not, however much there may be to eat), and would He have placed so much emphasis on the petition that He as well as ourselves eat? It wouldn't make sense to me. He is teaching us to set our wills on heavenly things and to ask that we might begin enjoying Him from here below; and would He get us involved in something so base as asking to eat? As if He didn't know us! For once we start worrying about bodily needs, those of the soul will be forgotten! Well, we are such temperate people that we are satisfied by little and ask for little! On the contrary, the more He gives us the more we think we are lacking everything, even water. Let those, my daughters, who want more than is necessary ask for this material bread.] There is no need or trial or persecution that is not easy to suffer if we begin to enjoy the delight and consolation of this sacred bread.

3. Ask the Father, daughters, together with the Lord, to give you your Spouse "this day" so that you will not be seen in this world without Him. To temper such great happiness it's sufficient that He remain disguised in these accidents of bread and wine. This is torment enough for anyone who has no other love

than Him nor any other consolation. Beg Him not to fail you, and to give you the dispositions to receive Him worthily.

4. Don't worry about the other bread, those of you who have sincerely surrendered yourselves to the will of God. I mean during these times of prayer when you should be dealing with more important things; there are other times for working and for earning your bread. [Have no fear that you will be in want of bread if you are not wanting in what you have said about the surrender of yourselves to God's will. And indeed, daughters, I say for myself, if I should maliciously fail in this surrender, as I have many other times, I would not beg that He give me this bread or anything else to eat. Let me die of hunger; why should I want life if with it I am daily gaining more of eternal death?] Carefully avoid wasting your thoughts at any time on what you will eat. Let the body work, for it is good that you work to sustain yourselves; let your soul be at rest. Leave this care, as has been amply pointed out,⁴ to your Spouse; He will care for you always.

5. Your attitude should be like that of a servant when he begins to serve. His care is about pleasing his master in everything. But the master is obliged to provide his servant with food as long as the servant is in the house and serves him, unless the master is so poor that he doesn't have enough either for himself or for his servant. In our case this isn't so; the Master always is, and will be, rich and powerful. Well, it wouldn't be right for the servant to go about asking for food when he knows that the master of the house takes care of providing it for him, and must do so. The master would rightly tell his servant to be occupied in serving and seeking ways to please the master, for the servant, by worrying about what isn't his own business, would be doing everything wrong.

Thus, Sisters, let whoever wants be concerned with asking for this bread. As for ourselves, let us ask the Eternal Father that we might merit to receive our heavenly bread in such a way that the Lord may reveal Himself to the eyes of our soul and make Himself thereby known since our bodily eyes cannot delight in beholding Him, because He is so hidden. Such

knowledge is another kind of satisfying and delightful sustenance that maintains life. [In order to sustain life we will be desiring that other bread more often than we want and asking for it even without realizing we're doing so. There's no need to stir ourselves to ask for it; for our wretched tendency toward base things will awaken us, as I say, more often than we may desire. But let us watch so that we don't advertently place our care on anything other than begging the Lord for what I have mentioned; in having this, we will have everything.]

6. Do you think this heavenly food fails to provide sustenance, even for these bodies, that it is not a great medicine even for bodily ills? I know that it is. I know a person⁵ with serious illnesses, who often experiences great pain, who through this bread had them taken away as though by a gesture of the hand and was made completely well. This is a common experience, and the illnesses are very recognizable, for I don't think they could be feigned. And because the wonders this most sacred bread effects in those who worthily receive it are well known, I will not mention many that could be mentioned regarding this person I've spoken of. I was able to know of them, and I know that this is no lie. But the Lord had given her such living faith that when she heard some persons saying they would have liked to have lived at the time Christ our Good walked in the world, she used to laugh to herself. She wondered what more they wanted since in the most Blessed Sacrament they had Him just as truly present as He was then.

7. But I know that for many years, when she received Communion, this person, though she was not very perfect, strove to strengthen her faith so that in receiving her Lord it was as if, with her bodily eyes, she saw Him enter her house. Since she believed that this Lord truly entered her poor home, she freed herself from all exterior things when it was possible and entered to be with Him. She strove to recollect the senses so that all of them would take notice of so great a good, I mean that they would not impede the soul from recognizing it. She considered she was at His feet and wept with the Magdalene, no more nor less than if she were seeing Him with her bodily

eyes in the house of the Pharisee.⁶ And even though she didn't feel devotion, faith told her that He was indeed there.

8. If we don't want to be fools and blind the intellect there's no reason for doubt. Receiving Communion is not like picturing with the imagination, as when we reflect upon the Lord on the cross or in other episodes of the Passion, when we picture within ourselves how things happened to Him in the past. In Communion the event is happening now, and it is entirely true. There's no reason to go looking for Him in some other place farther away. Since we know that Jesus is with us as long as the natural heat doesn't consume the accidents of bread, we should approach Him. Now, then, if when He went about in the world the mere touch of His robes cured the sick,⁷ why doubt, if we have faith, that miracles will be worked while He is within us and that He will give what we ask of Him, since He is in our house? His Majesty is not accustomed to paying poorly for His lodging if the hospitality is good.

9. If it pains you not to see Him with your bodily eyes, consider that seeing Him so is not fitting for us. To see Him in His glorified state is different from seeing Him as He was when He walked through this world. On account of our natural weakness there is no person capable of enduring such a glorious sight, nor would anyone in the world want to continue in it. In seeing this Eternal Truth one would see that all the things we pay attention to here below are lies and jokes. And in beholding such great Majesty, how would a little sinner like myself who has so much offended Him remain so close to Him? Beneath that bread He is easy to deal with. If a king were disguised it wouldn't matter to us at all if we conversed with him without so many gestures of awe and respect. It seems he would be obliged to put up with this lack since he is the one who disguised himself. Who would otherwise dare approach so unworthily, with so much lukewarmness, and with so many imperfections!

10. Oh, how we fail to know what we are asking for;⁸ and how His wisdom provided in a better way! He reveals Himself to those who He sees will benefit by His presence. Even though they fail to see Him with their bodily eyes, He has many

methods of showing Himself to the soul, through great interior feelings and through other different ways. Be with Him willingly; don't lose so good an occasion for conversing with Him as is the hour after having received Communion.⁹ If obedience should command something, Sisters, strive to leave your soul with the Lord. If you immediately turn your thoughts to other things, if you pay no attention and take no account of the fact that He is within you, how will He be able to reveal Himself to you? This, then, is a good time for our Master to teach us, and for us to listen to Him, kiss His feet because He wanted to teach us, and beg Him not to leave.¹⁰

11. If you have to pray to Him by looking at His picture, it would seem to me foolish. You would be leaving the Person Himself in order to look at a picture of Him. Wouldn't it be silly if a person we love very much and of whom we have a portrait came to see us and we stopped speaking with him so as to carry on a conversation with the portrait? Do you want to know when it is very good to have a picture of Christ and when it is a thing in which I find much delight? When He himself is absent, or when by means of a great dryness He wants to make us feel He is absent. It is then a wonderful comfort to see an image of One whom we have so much reason to love.¹¹ Wherever I turn my eyes, I would want to see His image. With what better or more pleasing thing can our eyes be occupied than with One who loves so much and who has in Himself all goods. Unfortunate are those heretics who through their own fault have lost this consolation among others.

12. But after having received the Lord, since you have the Person Himself present, strive to close the eyes of the body and open those of the soul and look into your own heart. For I tell you, and tell you again, and would like to tell you many times that you should acquire the habit of doing this every time you receive Communion and strive to have such a conscience that you will be allowed to enjoy this blessing frequently. Though He comes disguised, the disguise as I have said,¹² does not prevent Him from being recognized in many ways, in conformity with the desire we have to see Him. And you can desire to see Him so much that He will reveal Himself to you entirely.

13. On the other hand, if we pay no attention to Him but after receiving Him leave Him and go seeking after other base things, what is there for Him to do? Must He force us to see Him, since He wants to reveal Himself to us? No, for they didn't treat Him so well when He let Himself be seen openly by all and told them clearly who He was; very few were those who believed Him. So His Majesty is being merciful enough to all of us who love Him, by letting us know that it is He who is present in the most Blessed Sacrament. He doesn't want to show Himself openly, communicate His grandeurs, and give His treasures except to those who He knows desire Him greatly; these are His true friends. I tell you that whoever is not His true friend and does not draw near to receive Him as such, by doing what lies in her power, will never trouble Him with requests that He reveal Himself. Such a person will hardly have fulfilled what the Church requires when she will leave and quickly forget what took place. Thus, such a person hurries on as soon as she can to other business affairs, occupations, and worldly impediments so that the Lord of the house may not occupy it.

Chapter 35

With a prayerful exclamation to the Eternal Father concludes the subject that was begun.

BECAUSE THIS MATTER is so important I have greatly enlarged upon it, even though in discussing the prayer of recollection I spoke of the significance of entering within ourselves to be alone with God. When you do not receive Communion, daughters, but hear Mass, you can make a spiritual communion. Spiritual communion is highly beneficial; through it you can recollect yourselves in the same way after Mass, for the love of this Lord is thereby deeply impressed on the soul. If we prepare ourselves to receive Him, He never fails to give in many ways which we do not understand. It is like approaching a fire; even though the fire may be a large one, it will not be able to warm you well if you turn away and hide

your hands, though you will still get more heat than you would if you were in a place without one. But it is something else if we desire to approach Him. If the soul is disposed (I mean, if it wants to get warm), and if it remains there for a while, it will stay warm for many hours.

2. Now then, Sisters, consider that if in the beginning you do not fare well (for it could be that the devil will make you feel afflicted and constrained in heart since he knows the great damage that will be caused him by this recollection), the devil will make you think you find more devotion in other things and less in this recollection after Communion. Do not abandon this practice; the Lord will see in it how much you love Him. Remember that there are few souls who accompany Him and follow Him in trials. Let us suffer something for Him; His Majesty will repay you for it. Remember also how many persons there are who not only refuse to remain with Him but rudely reject Him. Well, we have to suffer something that He may understand we desire to see Him. And since He suffers and will suffer everything in order to find even one soul that will receive Him and lovingly keep Him within, let your desire be to do this. If there isn't anyone who will do it, the Eternal Father will rightly refuse to let Him remain with us. But the Father is so fond of friends and so much the Lord of His servants that in seeing the will of His good Son He doesn't want to hinder this excellent work; in it the Son's love for Him is fully demonstrated [by the invention of this admirable means in which He shows how much He loves us and helps us suffer our trials.]

3. Well, holy Father in heaven, since You desire and accept this work, and it is clear that You will not deny us anything that is good for us, there has to be someone, as I said in the beginning,¹ who will speak for Your Son since He never looks out for Himself. Let us be the ones, daughters, even though the thought is a bold one, we being who we are. But obeying and trusting in the Lord's command to us that we ask,² let us beseech His Majesty in the name of Jesus that, since nothing remained for Him to do and He left sinners a gift as great as this one, He might in His compassion desire and be pleased to pro-

vide a remedy that His Son may not be this badly treated. Let us beseech Him that, since His Son provided a means so good that we may offer Him many times in sacrifice, this precious gift may avail; that there'll be no advance made in the very great evil and disrespect committed and shown in places where this most Blessed Sacrament is present among those Lutherans, where churches are destroyed, so many priests lost, and the sacraments taken away.³

4. Well, what is this, my Lord and my God! Either bring the world to an end or provide a remedy for these very serious evils. There is no heart that can suffer them, not even among those of us who are wretched. I beseech You, Eternal Father, that You suffer them no longer. Stop this fire, Lord, for if You will You can. Behold that Your Son is still in the world. Through His reverence may all these ugly and abominable and filthy things cease. In His beauty and purity He doesn't deserve to be in a house where there are things of this sort. Do not answer for our sakes, Lord; we do not deserve it. Do it for Your Son's sake. We don't dare beseech You that He be not present with us; what would become of us? For if something appeases You, it is having a loved one like this here below. Since some means must be had, my Lord, may Your Majesty provide it.

5. O my God, would that I might have begged You much and served You diligently so as to be able to ask for this great favor in payment for my services, since You don't leave anyone without pay! But I have not done so, Lord; rather, perhaps I am the one who has angered You so that my sins have caused these many evils to come about. Well, what is there for me to do, my Creator, but offer this most blessed bread to You, and even though You have given it to us, return it to You and beg You through the merits of Your Son to grant me this favor since in so many ways He has merited that You do so? Now, Lord, now; make the sea calm! May this ship, which is the Church, not always have to journey in a tempest like this. Save us, Lord, for we are perishing.⁴

Chapter 36

Discusses these words of the Our Father: Dimitte nobis debita nostra.

SINCE OUR GOOD MASTER SAW that with this heavenly bread everything is easy for us, save through our own fault, and that we can carry out very well what we have said about the Father's will being done in us, He now tells the Father to forgive us our debts since we ourselves forgive. Thus, He says, going on with the prayer He teaches us, "And forgive us, Lord, our debts as we forgive our debtors."¹

2. Let us observe, Sisters, that He doesn't say "as we will forgive." We can thereby understand that whoever asks for a gift as great as the one last mentioned and whoever has already surrendered his will to God's will should have already forgiven. So, He says, "as we forgive." Thus, whoever may have said sincerely to the Lord *fiat voluntas tua* should have done that will entirely; at least have had the resolve to.

You see here why the saints were pleased with the wrongs and persecutions they suffered; they then had something to offer the Lord when they prayed to Him. What will someone as poor as I do, who has had so little to pardon and so much to be pardoned for?

This is a matter, Sisters, that we should reflect upon very much: that something so serious and important, as that our Lord forgive us our faults, which deserve eternal fire, be done by means of something so lowly as our forgiving others. And I have so little opportunity to offer even this lowly thing, that the Lord has to pardon me for nothing. [What can be said against someone like myself, or what wrong can be done to her who has deserved to be always mistreated by the demons? If the world were to treat me very badly, such mistreatment would be just. In sum, my Lord, I have nothing as a result to give You by means of which I may ask You to forgive my debts. May Your Son pardon me; no one has done me an injustice, and so I have nothing to pardon for your sake, unless, Lord, You accept my

desire. It seems to me that anything I might forgive I would forgive in order that You would forgive me, or to do Your will unconditionally. Yet I don't know what I would do actually if I were condemned without fault. Now I see myself so deserving of blame in Your presence that everyone falls short with respect to blaming me; although those who do not know what I am, as You know, think they are offending me.] Here Your mercy fits in well. May You be blessed for putting up with one so poor as I. What Your Son says in the name of all has to exclude me because of what I am and because I am so penniless.

3. But, my Lord, are there some persons in my company who have not understood this? If there are, I beg them in Your name to remember this and pay no attention to the little things they call wrongs. It seems that, like children, we are making houses out of straw with these ceremonious little rules of etiquette. Oh, God help me, Sisters, if we knew what honor is and what losing honor consists in! Now I am not speaking of ourselves, for it would be quite bad for us not to have understood this yet, but of myself at the time when I prized honor without understanding what it was. I was following the crowd [through what I heard.] Oh, by how many things was I offended! I am ashamed now. Yet, I wasn't at that time one of those who pay close attention to these little rules of etiquette. But neither was I careful about the main rule, because I didn't consider or pay any heed to the honor that is beneficial; that is, the honor that benefits the soul. And how well it was said by whoever said it that honor and profit don't go together; although I don't know if it was said with this purpose in mind. But it is right to the point because the soul's profit and what the world calls honor can never go together. It's a frightful thing; the world moves in the opposite direction. Blessed be the Lord who drew us out of it. [May it please His Majesty that such a concept of honor always be as far from this house as it is now. God deliver us from monasteries where they pay attention to these ceremonious little rules. He is never much honored in such monasteries. God help me, what great foolishness, that religious seek honor in such trifles; I am astonished! You don't

know about this, Sisters, but I want to tell you about it so that you will guard yourselves against it.]

4. But consider, Sisters, that the devil hasn't forgotten us. He also invents his own honors in monasteries and establishes his own laws. There, people ascend and descend in rank just as in the world. Those with degrees must follow in order, according to their academic titles. Why? I don't know. The one who has managed to become professor of theology must not descend to professor of philosophy, for it is a point of honor that he must ascend and not descend. Even if obedience should command, he would consider the change an affront. And there will always be someone standing by to defend him and tell him that it's an insult; then the devil at once discloses reasons why even according to God's law this thinking seems right. Well, now, among ourselves: the one who has been prioress must remain ineligible for any lower office; a preoccupation about who the senior is—for we never forget this—and we even think at times we gain merit by such concern because the order commands it.

5. One doesn't know whether to laugh or to cry; the latter would be more fitting. The order doesn't command us to lack humility. It commands that there be a balanced arrangement of things, but I don't have to be so careful about this arrangement when it comes to matters of self-esteem that I am as concerned about these little ceremonious rules as about other practices that perhaps we observe imperfectly. All of our perfection doesn't consist in the observance of what has to do with our honor. Others will look after me if I forget about myself. The fact is that since we are inclined to ascend—even though we will not ascend to heaven by such an inclination—there must be no descending. O Lord, Lord! Are You our Model and Master? Yes, indeed! Well then, what did Your honor consist of, You who honored us? Didn't you indeed lose it in being humiliated unto death? No, Lord, but You won it for all.

6. Oh, for the love of God, Sisters, how we get lost on the road because we start out wrong from the beginning.² Please God no soul will be lost because it keeps these miserable little

rules of etiquette without understanding what honor consists in. And then we shall reach the point of thinking that we have done a great deal if we pardon one of these little things that was neither an offense, nor an injury, nor anything. Like someone who has accomplished something, we shall think that the Lord pardons us because we have pardoned others. Help us understand, my God, that we do not know ourselves and that we come to You with empty hands; and pardon us through Your mercy. [Indeed, You are always the wronged and the offended one.] Truly, Lord, since all things come to an end, but the punishment is without end, I don't see anything that would give us a reason to remind You to grant us so great a favor; unless You would grant it because of Your Son who asks it of You.

7. But yet, how the Lord must esteem this love we have for one another! Indeed, Jesus could have put other virtues first and said: forgive us, Lord, because we do a great deal of penance or because we pray much and fast or because we have left all for You and love You very much. He didn't say forgive us because we would give up our lives for You, or, as I say, because of other possible things. But He said only, "forgive us because we forgive." Perhaps He said the prayer and offered it on our behalf because He knows we are so fond of this miserable honor and that to be forgiving is a virtue difficult for us to attain by ourselves but most pleasing to His Father.

8. Well, consider carefully, Sisters, that He says, "as we forgive," as though it were something already being done, as I have mentioned.³ And pay very close attention, for when among the favors God grants in the prayer of perfect contemplation that I mentioned⁴ there doesn't arise in the soul a very resolute desire to pardon any injury however grave it may be and to pardon it in deed when the occasion arises, do not trust much in that soul's prayer. And I don't refer to these nothings that they call injuries. For the soul God brings to Himself in so sublime a contemplation is not touched by these wrongs nor does it care at all whether it is esteemed or not. I didn't say this well, "nor does it care at all," for it is much more afflicted by honor than by dishonor and by a lot of ease and

rest than by trials. For when truly the Lord has given His kingdom here below, the soul no longer desires honor in this world. And so as to reign more sublimely it understands that the above-mentioned way is the true way; it has already seen through experience the great gain and progress that comes to it by suffering for God. Very seldom does God give such great gifts, save to persons who have willingly undergone many trials for Him. As I have said in another part of this book,⁵ the trials of contemplatives are great, and so the Lord looks for contemplatives among people who have been tested.

9. Now then, Sisters, realize that since these contemplatives already know what everything is worth, they are not long delayed by a passing thing. If at first a great affront or trial causes pain, their reason comes to their rescue, before the pain is fully felt, with another consideration as if to raise the banner and almost annihilate the pain by means of joy. This joy comes from their seeing that the Lord has placed in their hands something by which they will gain more graces and perpetual favors from His Majesty than they would in ten years through trials they might wish to undertake on their own. This is very common from what I understand, for I have dealt with many contemplatives and am certain that this is what happens. Just as others prize gold and jewels, they prize trials and desire them; they know that these latter are what will make them rich.

10. Self-esteem is far removed from these persons. They like others to know about their sins and like to tell about them when they see themselves esteemed. The same is true in matters concerning their lineage. They already know that in the kingdom without end they will have nothing to gain from this. If they should happen to be pleased to be of good descent, it's when this would be necessary in order to serve God. When it isn't, it grieves them to be taken for more than what they are; and without any grief at all but gladly they disillusion others. So it is with those to whom God grants the grace of this humility and great love for Himself. In what amounts to His greater service, they are already so forgetful of self that they can't even believe that others feel some things and consider them an affront.

11. These effects I just mentioned are found in persons who are closer to perfection and whom the Lord very habitually favors by bringing to Himself through perfect contemplation. But of the first effect, which is the resolve to suffer wrongs and suffer them even though this may be painful, I say that it will soon be possessed by anyone who has from the Lord this favor of the prayer of union. If one doesn't experience these effects and come away from prayer fortified in them, one may believe that the favor was not from God but an illusion, or the devil's gift bestowed so that we might consider ourselves more honored.

12. It can happen that in the beginning when the Lord grants these favors the soul will not immediately experience this fortitude. But I say that in a short while if He continues to grant them, it will have fortitude in this virtue of forgiving others even though it may not have fortitude in other virtues. I cannot believe that a person who comes so close to Mercy itself, where he realizes what he is and the great deal God has pardoned him of, would fail to pardon his offender immediately, in complete ease, and with a readiness to remain on very good terms with him. Such a person is mindful of the gift and favor granted by God, by which he saw signs of great love; and he rejoices that an opportunity is offered whereby he can show the Lord some love.

13. I repeat that I know many persons whom the Lord has favored by raising to supernatural things, giving them this prayer or contemplation that was mentioned and, even though I see other faults and imperfections in them, I have never seen anyone with this one; nor do I believe that such a fault will be present if the favors are from God, as I have said.⁶ The one who receives greater favors should observe whether these effects are increasing within him. If he doesn't see any increase, he should be afraid and refuse to believe that these gifts are from God, as I have said. For God's favor always enriches the soul it reaches. This is certain. Although the favor and gift passes quickly, it is gradually recognized through the benefits the soul receives. Since Jesus knows this well, He says resolutely to His holy Father that "we pardon our debtors."

Chapter 37

Speaks of the excellence of this prayer, the Our Father, and of how we shall in many ways find consolation in it.

WE OUGHT TO GIVE GREAT PRAISE to the Lord for the sublime perfection of this evangelical prayer. Each of us, daughters, can apply the prayer to her own needs since it was composed by such a good Master. I marvel to see that in so few words everything about contemplation and perfection is included; it seems we need to study no other book than this one. Up to now the Lord has taught us the whole way of prayer and of high contemplation, from the beginning stages to mental prayer, to the prayer of quiet, and to that of union; so much so that, if I knew how to explain the matter, a large book on prayer could be written based on this genuine foundation.¹ From here on, the Lord begins to teach us about the effects of His favors, as you have seen.

2. I have wondered why His Majesty did not explain more about these sublime and obscure things that we might all know about them. It has seemed to me that since this prayer was intended for general use so that each one could petition according to his own intention, be consoled, and think that he has a good understanding of the prayer, the Lord left it in this obscure form. Contemplatives and persons already very much committed to God, who no longer desire earthly things, ask for the heavenly favors that can, through God's goodness, be given on earth. Those who still live on earth, and it is good that they live in conformity with their state in life, may ask also for bread. They must be sustained and must sustain their households. Such a petition is very just and holy, and so also is their petition for other things according to their needs.

3. But both should consider that two of the things mentioned pertain to all: giving Him our will and forgiving others. True, there is a more and a less in the degree to which this is done, as has been said.² The perfect will give their will in the way perfect souls do and forgive with that perfection that was

mentioned. We, Sisters, will do what we can; the Lord receives everything.³ It seems that on our behalf He makes a kind of pact with His Eternal Father, like one who says: "You do this, Lord, and My brothers will do that." Well, surely He doesn't fail to do His part. Oh, oh, how well He pays! And He pays without measure!

4. We can say this prayer only once in such a way that the Lord will enrich us since He sees that we do so sincerely and are determined to do what we say. He likes us to be truthful with Him. If we speak plainly and clearly so that we don't say one thing and then act differently, He always gives more than what we ask of Him.

Our good Master knows this well. He knows that those who ask with perfection will be filled with such favors from His Father that they will reach a high state. In fact, those who are already perfect or those who are approaching it are not afraid of anything, nor should they be, since they have trampled the world underfoot, as the saying goes. The Lord of the world is pleased with them, and they have the greatest hope of this in the effects of the favors He grants them. Absorbed in these delights they don't want to remember even that there is a world or that they have enemies.

5. O Eternal Wisdom! O good Teacher! What a wonderful thing it is, daughters, to have a wise and cautious teacher who foresees the dangers. This is the entire good that a spiritual soul can desire here below because it provides great security. One could not exaggerate the importance of this. Thus since the Lord sees that it is necessary to awaken and remind us that we have enemies, that it is very dangerous to be negligent with regard to these enemies, and that we need much more help from the Eternal Father because our fall will be from a higher place, and so that we do not go about mistaken and without self-knowledge, He makes the following petitions so necessary for all as long as we live in this exile: "And lead us not, Lord, into temptation; but deliver us from evil."

Chapter 38

Deals with the great need we have to beseech the Eternal Father to grant us what we ask for in the words, Et ne nos inducas in tentationem, sed libera nos a malo; and explains some temptations. The subject matter is important.

WE HAVE GREAT THINGS to think about and understand here, Sisters, because these things are what we are asking for. Now see, I am certain that those who reach perfection do not ask the Lord to free them from trials or temptations or persecutions or struggles. This is another very great and certain effect of the contemplation and the favors His Majesty gives, and of the Lord's Spirit rather than of an illusion. On the contrary, as I have said a little while ago,¹ these persons desire, ask for, and love trials. They are like soldiers who are happier when there are more wars because they then hope to earn more. If there is no war, they receive their wages but realize they won't get rich.

2. Believe, Sisters, that the soldiers of Christ, those who experience contemplation and engage in prayer, are eager to fight. They never fear public enemies very much; they already recognize them and know that these enemies have no power against the strength the Lord gives and that they themselves always come out the victors and with much gain. They never turn from these enemies. Those whom they fear—and it is right they fear and always ask the Lord to be freed from them—are the traitorous enemies, the devils who transfigure themselves into angels of light,² who come disguised. Not until they have done much harm to the soul do they allow themselves to be recognized. They suck away our blood and destroy our virtues, and we go about in the midst of the same temptation but do not know it. With regard to these enemies, daughters, let us ask and often beg the Lord in the Our Father to free us and not let us walk into temptation, so that they will not draw us into error or hide the light and truth from us, that the poison will be discovered. Oh, how rightly does our good Master ask this for us and teach us to ask for it.

3. Consider, daughters, the many ways these enemies can cause harm. Don't think they do so only by making us suppose that the delights and consolations they can feign in us are from God. This seems to me the least harm—in part—they can cause; rather, it could be that by means of this they will make one advance more quickly. For, in being fed on that delight, such a person will spend more hours in prayer. Since he doesn't know that the delight is from the devil and since he sees he is unworthy of those consolations, he doesn't stop thanking God. He will feel greater obligation to serve Him and, thinking the favors come from the hand of the Lord, he will strive to dispose himself so that God will grant him more.

4. Strive always, Sisters, for humility and to see that you are unworthy of these favors; do not seek them. I hold that the devil loses many souls who strive for this humility. He thinks he is going to bring them to perdition, but the Lord draws good from the evil the devil aims at. His Majesty looks at our intention, which is to please and serve Him and remain with Him in prayer; and the Lord is faithful.³ It's good to be on one's guard lest there be a break in humility, or some vainglory emerge. If you beseech the Lord to free you from this, do not fear, daughters, that His Majesty will allow you to be favored very much by anyone other than Himself.

5. The way the devil can do a great deal of harm, without our realizing it, is to make us believe we have virtues when we do not. This is a pestilence.⁴ In regard to the delights and consolations, it seems merely that we are receiving and that we have the greater obligation to serve. In regard to our thinking we are virtuous, it seems we are serving and giving and that the Lord is obliged to pay. Thus little by little this latter notion does great harm. On the one hand it weakens humility, and on the other hand we grow careless about acquiring that virtue we think we have already acquired. Well, what is the remedy, Sisters? That which seems best to me is what our Master teaches us: prayer and supplication to the Eternal Father not to let us enter into temptation.⁵

6. I also want to tell you something else. If it seems the Lord

has already given us virtue, let us understand that actually it has been received and that He can take it away, as in fact often happens, but not without His wonderful providence. Haven't you ever seen this for yourselves, Sisters? I have. Sometimes I think I am very detached; and as a matter of fact when put to the test, I am. At another time I will find myself so attached, and perhaps to things that the day before I would have made fun of, that I almost don't know myself. At other times I think I have great courage and that I wouldn't turn from anything of service to God; and when put to the test, I do have this courage for some things. Another day will come in which I won't find the courage in me to kill even an ant for God if in doing so I'd meet with any opposition. In like manner it seems to me that I don't care at all about things or gossip said of me; and when I'm put to the test this is at times true — indeed I am pleased about what they say. Then there come days in which one word alone distresses me, and I would want to leave the world because it seems everything is a bother to me. And I am not alone in this. I have noticed it in many persons better than I, and know that it so happens.

7. Now since this is true, who will be able to say of himself that he is virtuous or rich? For at the very moment when there is need of virtue one finds oneself poor. No, Sisters; but let us always think we are poor, and not go into debt when we do not have the means with which to repay. The treasure will have to come from elsewhere, and we do not know when the Lord will want to leave us in the prison of our misery without giving us anything. And if others in thinking that we are good, bestow favor and honor on us—which is the borrowing I mentioned—both they and we ourselves will have been fooled. True, if we serve with humility, the Lord in the end will succor us in our needs; but if this poverty of spirit is not genuinely present at every step, as they say, the Lord will abandon us. And this abandonment by the Lord is one of His greatest favors, for He does it so that we might be humble and understand in truth that we have nothing we haven't received.

8. Now, then, take note of some other advice: the devil

makes us think we have a virtue, let's say of patience because we resolve and make very frequent acts of willingness to suffer much for God, and it seems to us as a matter of fact that we would suffer much; so we are very satisfied, for the devil helps us to believe this. I advise you not to pay any attention to these virtues; let us neither think we know them other than by name nor, until we see the proof, think the Lord has given them to us. For it will happen that with one displeasing word spoken to you, your patience will go tumbling to the ground. When you suffer often, praise God that He is beginning to teach you this virtue of patience and strive to endure, for the suffering is a sign that in this way He wants you to pay for the virtue. He gives it to you, and you do not possess it save as though on deposit, as has already been said.⁶

9. The devil brings about another temptation. We think we are very poor in spirit and have the habit of saying that we don't desire anything or that we couldn't care less about anything. But hardly does the occasion arise to receive a gift—even if it would be more than we need—than our poverty of spirit is completely ruined. So often do we say we have this virtue that we end up believing we have it.

Great is the importance of always being careful to understand this temptation, both in the things I have mentioned as well as in many others. For when the Lord truly gives one of these solid virtues, it seems it carries all the others in its wake. This is something felt very clearly. But I again warn you that even though it seems you possess it, you should fear lest you be mistaken. The truly humble person always walks in doubt about his own virtues, and usually those he sees in his neighbors seem more certain and more valuable.

Chapter 39

Continues the same subject, gives advice about some different kinds of temptations, and sets down two remedies by which to free oneself from them.

NOW BE ALSO ON YOUR GUARD, daughters, against some types of humility given by the devil in which great disquiet is felt about the gravity of our sins. This disturbance can afflict in many ways even to the point of making one give up receiving Communion and practicing private prayer.¹ These things are given up because the devil makes one feel unworthy. And when such persons approach the Blessed Sacrament, the time they used to spend in receiving favors is now spent in wondering whether or not they are well prepared. The situation gets so bad that the soul thinks God has abandoned it because of what it is; it almost doubts His mercy. Everything it deals with seems dangerous, and what it uses, however good, seems fruitless. It feels such distrust of itself that it folds its arms and remains idle; what is good in others seems evil when the soul sees it within its own self.

2. Consider carefully, daughters, the matter I'm going to speak to you about, for sometimes it will be through humility and virtue that you hold yourselves to be so wretched, and at other times it will be a gross temptation. I know of this because I have gone through it. Humility does not disturb or disquiet or agitate, however great it may be; it comes with peace, delight, and calm. Even though a person upon seeing himself so wretched understands clearly that he merits to be in hell, suffers affliction, thinks everyone should in justice abhor him, and almost doesn't dare ask for mercy, his pain, if the humility is genuine, comes with a sweetness in itself and a satisfaction that he wouldn't want to be without. The pain of genuine humility doesn't agitate or afflict the soul; rather, this humility expands it and enables it to serve God more. The other type of pain disturbs everything, agitates everything, afflicts the entire soul, and is very painful. I think the devil's aim is to make us think

we are humble and, in turn, if possible, make us lose confidence in God.

When you find yourselves in this condition, stop thinking about your misery, insofar as possible, and turn your thoughts to the mercy of God, to how He loves us and suffered for us. And if you are undergoing a temptation, you will not even be able to do this, for the devil will not let you quiet your mind or concentrate on anything unless so as to tire you all the more. It will be enough if you recognize that this is a temptation.²

Likewise he tempts us in regard to excessive penances so that we might think we are more penitential than others and are doing something. If you hide them from your confessor or prioress, or if when told to stop you do not do so, you are clearly undergoing a temptation. Strive to obey, even if this may be more painful for you, since the greatest perfection lies in obedience.

4. The devil sets up another dangerous temptation: self-assurance in the thought that we will in no way return to our past faults and worldly pleasures: "for now I have understood the world and know that all things come to an end and that the things of God give me greater delight." If this self-assurance is present in beginners, it is very dangerous because with it a person doesn't take care against entering once more into the occasions of sin, and he falls flat; please God the relapse will not bring about something much worse. For since the devil sees that he is dealing with a soul that can do him harm and bring profit to others, he uses all his power so that it might not rise.

Thus, however many delights and pledges of love the Lord gives you, never proceed with such self-assurance that you stop fearing lest you fall again; and be on guard against the occasions of sin.

5. Strive, without hiding anything, to discuss these favors and consolations with someone who will enlighten you. And take care about this: however sublime the contemplation, let your prayer always begin and end with self-knowledge. And if the favor is from God, even though you may not want to follow the advice, you will still follow it most of the time because

God's favor brings humility and always leaves greater light that we may understand the little that we are.

I don't want to enlarge on this any more, for you will find many books with such advice. I have said what I did because I have experienced it and found myself in trouble at times. All that we say, however much it is, cannot give us complete security.

6. Thus, Eternal Father, what can we do but have recourse to You and pray that these enemies of ours not lead us into temptation? Let public enemies come, for by Your favor we will be more easily freed. But these other treacheries; who will understand them, my God? We always need to pray to You for a remedy. Instruct us, Lord, so that we may understand ourselves and be secure. You already know that few take this path; but if they have to travel it with so many fears, many fewer will take it.

7. What a strange thing! It's as though the devil tempts only those who take the path of prayer. And everyone is more surprised by a mistake of one of those who are nearing perfection than by the public mistakes and sins of a hundred thousand others. With these latter mistakes there is no need to consider whether they are good or bad, for from a thousand-leagues distance one recognizes that they come from Satan.

As a matter of fact people are right in being surprised, for among those who recite the Our Father as was explained there are so very few deceived by the devil that as something new and unusual their mistake causes surprise. It is something very common among mortals that they pass over easily what they continually see, and wonder about what seldom or almost never happens. And the devil himself causes them to be surprised, for this surprise is to his advantage; he loses many souls through one who reaches perfection. [And I say that this is so surprising I do not marvel that others are surprised. Unless it is very much due to their own fault, souls who practice prayer walk so much more securely than those who take another road. They are like those in the stands watching the bull in comparison with one who is right in front of its horns. I have heard this comparison, and it seems to me true to the letter.

Do not fear, Sisters, to travel these paths, for in prayer there are many. Some souls profit by one path, and others by another, as I have said. Prayer is a safe road; you will be more quickly freed from temptation when close to the Lord than when far. Beseech Him and ask Him to deliver you from evil as you do so often each day in the Our Father.]

Chapter 40

Tells how by striving always to walk in the love and the fear of God we will proceed safely among so many temptations.

NOW THEN, GOOD MASTER, teach us how to live without any sudden assault in so dangerous a war. What we can have, daughters, and what His Majesty gave us are love and fear. Love will quicken our steps; fear will make us watch our steps to avoid falling along the way. On this way there are many stumbling blocks for all of us who are alive and continue our journey. With this fear we will be secure against being deceived.

2. You will ask me how you can tell if you have these two virtues which are so great; and you are right in doing so, for you cannot be very certain and definite about them. If we possess love, we are certainly in the state of grace. But reflect, Sisters, that there are some signs that even the blind, it seems, see. They are manifest signs, though you may not want to recognize them. They cry out loudly, for not many possess them perfectly; and hence these signs are more obvious. Love and fear of God: what more could you ask for! They are like two fortified castles from which one can wage war on the world and the devils.

3. Those who truly love God, love every good, desire every good, favor every good, praise every good. They always join, favor, and defend good people. They have no love for anything but truth and whatever is worthy of love. Do you think it is possible for a person who really loves God to love vanities? No, indeed, he cannot; nor can he love riches, or worldly things, or

delights, or honors, or strife, or envy. All of this is so because he seeks only to please the Beloved. These persons go about dying so that their Beloved might love them, and thus they dedicate their lives to learning how they might please Him more. Hide itself? Oh, with regard to the love of God—if it is genuine love—this is impossible. If you don't think so, look at St. Paul or the Magdalene. Within three days the one began to realize that he was sick with love; that was St. Paul. The Magdalene knew from the first day; and how well she knew! Love has this characteristic: it can be greater or lesser in degree. Thus, the love makes itself known according to its intensity. When slight, it shows itself but slightly; when strong, it shows itself strongly. But where there is love of God, whether little or great, it is always recognized.

4. However, the things with which we are now dealing more specifically, the deceptions and illusions the devil brings on contemplatives, are not few. With contemplatives there is always much love, or they wouldn't be contemplatives; and so their love is clearly recognized and in many ways. It is a great fire; it cannot but shine brightly. And if this splendor is not present, they should walk with serious misgivings; they should believe that they indeed have many reasons for fear; they should strive to understand these; they should pray, walk with humility, and beseech the Lord not to lead them into temptation. For certainly if this sign isn't present, I fear we may walk into temptation. But if one proceeds with humility, strives to know the truth, is subject to a confessor, and communicates with him openly and truthfully, it will come about, as has been said,¹ that the things by which the devil intends to cause death will cause life, however many the haunting illusions he wants to scare you with.

5. But if you feel this love of God I've mentioned and the fear I shall now speak of,² rejoice and be at peace. In order to disturb your soul so that you will not enjoy these wonderful blessings the devil will set a thousand false fears before you and strive that others do so. Since he cannot win us over, he can at least try to make us lose something. He may strive to make souls lose when they might have gained a great deal by thinking that

his favors are from God and are bestowed on creatures as wretched as themselves and that it is possible for God to grant favors—for it seems sometimes we have forgotten about the Lord's ancient mercies.³

6. Do you think it matters little to the devil to set up these fears? No, it matters a great deal, for he causes two kinds of harm. First, those who listen to him are struck with a terror of approaching prayer, for they think they will be deceived. Second, if it were not for these fears many more would come closer to God in seeing that He is so good, as I have said,⁴ and that it is possible for Him now to communicate so much with sinners. They covet these favors. And they are right, for I know some persons who were encouraged by such favors and began prayer; and in a short while the favors became authentic, and the Lord granted them great ones.

7. So, Sisters, when you see among yourselves someone to whom the Lord gives favors, praise the Lord very much but don't think she is for this reason safe; rather help her with more prayer. No one can be safe while living and engulfed in the dangers of this tempestuous sea.

You will not fail to recognize this love where it is present, nor do I know how it can be concealed.⁵ If we love creatures here on earth, it's impossible, we are told, to hide this, and the more we do to hide it the more it is revealed (and it is something so lowly that it doesn't merit the name "love," for it is grounded on nothing). And could one conceal a love that is so strong and just that it always increases and sees no reason to stop since its foundation is made from the cement of being repaid by another love? This other love can no longer be doubted since it was shown so openly and with so many sufferings and trials, and with the shedding of blood even to the point of death in order that we might have no doubt about it. Oh, God help me, how different must the love of God be from the love of creatures for whoever has experienced the former!

8. May it please His Majesty to give us His love before He takes us out of this life, for it will be a great thing at the hour of death to see that we are going to be judged by the One whom we have loved above all things. We shall be able to proceed

securely with the judgment concerning our debts. It will not be like going to a foreign country but like going to our own, because it is the country of one whom we love so much and who loves us. [In this love — besides everything else — there is greater security than with earthly loves; in loving God we are certain that He loves us.] Remember here, my daughters, the gain there is in this love, and the loss in not having it. Such a loss puts us in the hands of the enemy, in hands so cruel, hands so hostile toward everything good, and so fond of everything bad.

9. What will become of the poor soul that, after being freed from the sufferings and trials of death, falls immediately into these hands? What terrible rest it receives! How mangled as it goes to hell! What a multitude of different kinds of serpents! What a terrifying place! What a wretched inn! If it is hard for a self-indulgent person (for such are the ones who will be more likely to go there) to spend one night in a bad inn, what do you think that sad soul will feel at being in this kind of inn forever, without end?

Let us not desire delights, daughters; we are well-off here; the bad inn lasts for only a night. Let us praise God; let us force ourselves to do penance in this life. How sweet will be the death of one who has done penance for all his sins, of one who won't have to go to purgatory! Even from here below you can begin to enjoy glory! You will find no fear within yourself but complete peace.

10. As long as we have not reached this state, Sisters, let us beseech God that if therefore we are to receive sufferings, they will be received here below. For, with the hope of being freed from them, we can bear them here willingly, and we will not lose His friendship and grace. Let us beseech Him to give us His grace in this life so that we will not walk unawares into temptation.⁶

Chapter 41

Speaks of the fear of God and of how we must be on guard against venial sins.

HOW LENGTHY I HAVE BEEN! But not as lengthy as I wanted to be, for it is a delight to speak about the love of God. What will it be like to possess it? May the Lord give it to me because of who His Majesty is. [Let me not leave this life, O my Lord, until I no longer desire anything in it; neither let me know any love outside of You, Lord, nor let me succeed in using this term “love” for anyone else. Everything is false since the foundation is false, and so the edifice doesn’t last. I don’t know why we are surprised. I laugh to myself when I hear it said: “That person repaid me badly.” “This other one doesn’t love me.” What does anyone have to repay you for, or why should anyone love you? This experience will show you what the world is, for your very love for it will afterward punish you. And this is what wears you down: you realize you have let your affection become involved like children in their games.]¹

Now let us deal with the fear of God.² This trait is also something easily recognized by the person who has it as well as by those who approach him. But I want you to understand that in the beginning it is not so developed, unless in some persons to whom, as I have said,³ the Lord grants great favors, for in a short time He makes them rich in virtue. Hence this fear isn’t discernible in everyone—at the outset, I mean. It goes on increasing in strength each day. But it is soon recognized because in the beginning one starts to turn away from sin and its occasions and from bad companions; and other signs as well are seen. But once the soul has reached contemplation—which is what we are now dealing with most—the fear of God also, as with love, becomes very manifest; it doesn’t disguise itself even exteriorly. Despite the fact that you may watch these persons very carefully, you will not see them become careless. For no matter how long we observe them, the Lord keeps them in such a way that even if a thing very much to their own interest comes along, they will not advertently commit a venial sin;

mortal sins they fear like fire. And illusions involving sin are the ones I would want us, Sisters, to be very much afraid of. Let us beseech God always that the temptation may not be so strong as to make us offend Him, that its strength might not outweigh the fortitude He gives us to conquer it. This fear is what is important; it is what I desire may never be taken from us, for it is what will help us.

2. Oh, what a great thing it is to have resisted offending the Lord so that His slaves and servants in hell may be bound; for in the end all must serve Him despite themselves. But those in hell do so by force, whereas we do so willingly. Therefore, if we please the Lord, those in hell will be kept bound; they will not do anything that may be harmful to us however much they might draw us into temptation and set secret snares for us.

3. Be careful and attentive—this is very important—until you see that you are strongly determined not to offend the Lord, that you would lose a thousand lives rather than commit a mortal sin, and that you are most careful not to commit venial sins—that is, advertently; for otherwise, who can go without committing many? But there is an advertence that is very deliberate; another that comes so quickly that committing the venial sin and adverting to it happen almost together in such a way that we don't first realize what we are doing. But from any very deliberate sin, however small it be, may God deliver us. [I don't know how we could be so bold as to go against such a great Lord, even though it be in something very small.] What's more, there is nothing small if it goes against His immense Majesty and we see He is looking at us. It seems to me a sin is very deliberate when, for example, one says: "Lord, although this grieves You, I will do it; I'm already aware that You see it, and I know You do not want it, and I understand this; but I want to follow my whim and appetite more than Your will." It doesn't seem to me possible that something like this can be called little, however light the fault; but it's serious, very serious. [For the love of God, daughters, never become careless in this regard; now—glory be to the Lord—you are not.]

4. Consider, Sisters, for the love of God, if you want to gain

this fear of the Lord, that it is very helpful to understand the seriousness of an offense against God and to reflect on this frequently in your thoughts; for it is worth our life and much more to have this virtue rooted in our souls. And until you have it, you must always proceed carefully and turn from every occasion and companion who does not help you come closer to God. We should take great care in everything we do to bend our will, and take care that our speech be edifying; we must flee those places where conversations are not of God.

It's very necessary that this fear be deeply impressed within the soul. Such fear is easy to obtain if there is true love together with a great inner determination, as I have said,⁴ not to commit an offense against God for any created thing, even though afterward the soul may sometimes fall because we are weak and have no reason to trust ourselves. When we are more determined we are less confident of ourselves, for confidence must be placed in God. When we understand this that I said about ourselves, there will be no need to go about so tense and constrained; the Lord will protect us, and the habit acquired will now be a help against offending Him. The need instead will be to go about with a holy freedom, conversing with those who are good even though they may be somewhat worldly. For those who, before you possessed this authentic fear of God, were a poison and a means of killing the soul will afterward often be a help to your loving and praising God more because He has freed you from that which you recognize as a glaring danger. If previously you played a part in contributing to their weaknesses, now by your mere presence you contribute to their restraint; this happens without their having any idea of paying you honor.

5. I often praise the Lord, thinking how it comes about that often a servant of God, without uttering a word, prevents things from being said against God. This must happen for the same reason that something similar happens here below: there is always some restraint so as not to offend an absent person in the presence of someone known to be his friend. So it is with a servant of God: his friendship with God wins him respect no matter how lowly his status, and others avoid afflicting him in

a matter they so well realize would grieve him; that is, they avoid offending God in his presence. The fact is that I don't know the reason for this, but I do know that it's a common occurrence. So do not be tense, for if you begin to feel constrained, such a feeling will be very harmful to everything good, and at times you will end up being scrupulous and become incapable of doing anything for yourself or for others. And if you don't end up being scrupulous, this constraint will be good for you but it will not bring many souls to God, because they will see so much repression and tenseness. Our nature is such that this constraint is frightening and oppressive to others, and they flee from following the road that you are taking, even though they know clearly that it is the more virtuous path.

6. Another harm derives from this attitude; it is that of judging others. There are those who advance with greater holiness and in order to be of benefit to their neighbor speak with him freely and without this constraint; but since they do not journey by your path they at once seem to you to be imperfect. If they have a holy joy, it will seem to be dissipation, especially to those of us who have no learning or knowledge of what one can speak about without sinning. This constraint is a very dangerous thing; it means going about in continual temptation and it bears ill effects; it is detrimental to your neighbor. To think that if all do not proceed as you do, in this constrained way, they are not proceeding well is extremely wrong.

And there is another harm: in some things of which you must speak, and it is right that you speak, you don't dare do so for fear of going to extremes; rather, perhaps, you speak well of something that it would be very good for you to abhor.

7. So, Sisters, strive as much as you can, without offense to God, to be affable and understanding in such a way that everyone you talk to will love your conversation and desire your manner of living and acting, and not be frightened and intimidated by virtue. This is very important for religious; the holier they are the more sociable they are with their Sisters. And even though you may feel very distressed if all your Sisters' conversations do not go as you would like them to, never turn

away from them if you want to help your Sisters and be loved. This is what we must strive for earnestly, to be affable, agreeable, and pleasing to persons with whom we deal, especially our Sisters.

8. Thus, my daughters, strive to think rightly about God, for He doesn't look at trifles as much as you think, and don't lose your courage or allow your soul to be constrained, for many blessings could be lost. Have the right intention, a resolute will, as I have said,⁵ not to offend God. Don't let your soul withdraw into a corner, for instead of obtaining sanctity you will obtain many imperfections that the devil in other ways will place before you; and, as I have said,⁶ you will not be of as much benefit to yourself or to others as you could have been.

9. Here you see how, with these two virtues—love and fear of God—you can advance on this road calmly and quietly, but not carelessly since fear must always take the lead. As long as we live, we will never have complete security; that would be a great danger. And this is what our Teacher understood when at the end of this prayer He spoke these words to His Father as one who well understood they were necessary.⁷

Chapter 42

Discusses these last words of the Our Father: Sed libera nos a malo. Amen. But deliver us from evil. Amen.

IT SEEMS TO ME JESUS WAS RIGHT to include Himself in this petition, for we already see how tired He was of this life when He said to His Apostles at the last supper: *I have greatly desired to eat this supper with you.*¹ Here we see how weary He must have been of living. Nowadays people don't tire of living even if they go on to be a hundred, but always want to live longer. True, we don't suffer in life as much evil and as many trials as His Majesty suffered, nor such poverty. What was His whole life if not a continual death, in which He always saw beforehand that most cruel death they were going to inflict on Him? And this was the least of His sufferings; but how many

offenses committed against His Father and what a multitude of souls that were lost! If one who possesses charity here on earth finds all this a great torment, what must have been the Lord's torment, with His boundless and immeasurable charity? And what a good reason He had to beseech the Father to free Him finally from so many evils and trials and bring Him to rest forever in the Father's kingdom, since He was its true inheritor!

2. *Amen.* By the "amen" I understand that since with this word all things come to an end, the Lord asks likewise that we be freed from all evil forever. [It is useless, Sisters, to think that while we live we can be free of many temptations and imperfections and even sins, for it is said that whoever thinks he is without sin deceives himself²—and this is true. Now, if we turn to bodily ailments and hardships, who is without very many and in many ways? Nor is it good that we ask to be without them.

Well, then, let us understand what we are asking for here since it seems impossible to say "from all evil," whether of the body or, as I have said, of imperfections and faults in the service of God. I am not speaking about the saints—they can do everything in Christ, as St. Paul said³—but sinners like myself. I see myself closed in by weakness, lukewarmness, and a lack of mortification, and many other things. I see that it behooves me to ask the Lord for a remedy. You, daughters, ask according to what you think. I do not find this remedy while living, and so I ask the Lord to deliver me from all evil forever. What good do we find in this life, Sisters, since we lack so much good and are absent from Him?

Deliver me, Lord, from this shadow of death, deliver me from so many trials, deliver me from so many sufferings, deliver me from so many changes, from so many compliments that we are forced to receive while still living, from so many, many, many things that tire and weary me, that would tire anyone reading this if I mentioned them all. There's no longer anyone who can bear to live. This weariness must come to me because I have lived so badly, and from seeing that the way I live now is still not the way I should live since I owe so much.] Thus I beseech the Lord to deliver me from all evil forever since I do

not make up for what I owe; it could be that perhaps each day I become more indebted. And what is unendurable, Lord, is not to know for certain that I love You or that my desires are acceptable before You. O my Lord and my God, deliver me now from all evil and be pleased to bring me to the place where all blessings are. What do they still hope for here, those to whom You have given knowledge of what the world is, and those who have a living faith concerning what the Eternal Father has kept for them?

3. To ask for these blessings with great desire and complete determination is a clear sign for contemplatives that the favors they receive in prayer are from God. Thus those who have this sign should esteem their prayer highly. In the case of my asking for these things the same is not true; I mean that it shouldn't be interpreted as a sign of divine favors; but since I have lived so badly, I fear living still longer; and so many trials weary me. It is no surprise that those who have a share in the consolations of God desire to be there where they will enjoy them more than in mere sips, that they do not want to remain in a life where there are these many obstacles to the enjoyment of so much good, and that they desire to be where the Sun of justice⁴ does not set. Everything they afterward see here below will be completely dark to them, and I marvel at how they live. They could not live with any contentment if they have received and already begun to enjoy the Lord's kingdom here below. And such a person must not live for his own will but for the will of his King.

4. Oh, how different this life would have to be in order for one not to desire death! How our will deviates in its inclination from that which is the will of God. He wants us to love truth; we love the lie. He wants us to desire the eternal; we, here below, lean toward what comes to an end. He wants us to desire sublime and great things; we, here below, desire base and earthly things. He would want us to desire only what is secure; we, here below, love the dubious. Everything is a mockery, my daughters, except beseeching God to free us from these dangers forever and draw us at last away from every evil. Even though our desire may not be perfect, let us force ourselves to make the request. What does it cost us to ask for a

great deal? We are asking it of One who is powerful. But in order to be right, let us leave the giving to His will since we have already given Him our own. His name be forever hallowed in heaven and on earth, and may His will be always done in me. Amen.

[Here you see, friends, what it means to pray vocally with perfection. It means that you be aware of and understand whom you are asking, who it is that is asking, and what you are asking for. When they tell you that it isn't good to practice any other kind of prayer than vocal prayer, do not be distressed. Read this very carefully, and what you do not understand about prayer, beseech the Lord to teach you. For no one can take vocal prayer from you or make you recite the Our Father hastily and without understanding it. If some person should take it from you or counsel you to give it up, do not believe him. Believe that he is a false prophet and consider that in these times of ours you don't have to believe everybody. Even though there is nothing to fear from those who can counsel you now, we don't know what will come in the future.

I have also thought of saying something to you about how to recite the Hail Mary. But I have been so lengthy that I have to let it go. It is enough for you to have understood how to recite the Our Father well in order to know how to recite all the vocal prayers you must recite.]

5. Now see, Sisters, how the Lord by giving me understanding of the great deal we ask for when reciting this evangelical prayer has removed the difficulty involved in my teaching you and myself the path that I began to explain to you. May He be blessed forever! Certainly, it never entered my mind that this prayer contained so many deep secrets; for now you have seen the entire spiritual way contained in it, from the beginning stages until God engulfs the soul and gives it to drink abundantly from the fount of living water, which He said was to be found at the end of the way.⁵ [And having come out of it—I mean of this prayer—I don't know how to go any further.]

It seems the Lord has desired to give us understanding, Sisters, of the great consolation contained in this prayer. It is highly beneficial to persons who don't know how to read. If

they understand this prayer, they can draw a lot of doctrine from it and find consolation there. [And when books are taken away from us, this book cannot be taken away, for it comes from the mouth of Truth itself, who cannot err. And since, as I have said, we recite the Our Father so many times in a day, let us delight in it and strive to learn from so excellent a Master the humility with which He prays and all the other things that were mentioned.]

6. Sisters, beg this good Master to pardon me, for I have been bold to speak of such sublime things. His Majesty knows well that my intellect would not have been capable of it if He had not taught me what I have said. Be grateful to Him, Sisters, for He must have done so because of the humility with which you asked me and desired to be taught by someone so miserable.

[Well, Sisters, it now seems the Lord doesn't want me to say any more, for I don't know what to say; although I thought of going on. The Lord has taught you and me the path that I have described in the book I said I wrote,⁶ how one reaches this fount of living water, what the soul feels there, how God satisfies it, takes away thirst for earthly things, and makes it grow in the things pertaining to the service of God. Those who have reached this fount will find that book very beneficial and receive much light from it. You may get it from Father Domingo Báñez, a *presentado* of the Order of St. Dominic, who as I said is my confessor and the one to whom I'll give this book. If this one is all right for you to see and he gives it to you, he'll also give you that other one.]

7. If he thinks this book will be helpful and gives it to you, I will be consoled that you are consoled. If it should be such that no one may see it, you can accept my good will, for by this work I have obeyed your command. I consider myself well paid for the trouble involved in writing it, for there has been no trouble at all in thinking out what I have said.

May the Lord be blessed and praised; from Him comes every good we speak of, think about, and do. Amen.

*Meditations on
the Song of Songs*

MEDITATIONS ON THE SONG OF SONGS

INTRODUCTION

ALTHOUGH AT BOTH the beginning and the end of these meditations Teresa says she wrote them out of obedience, the obviously main motivating force was her desire to share with her Sisters the delight and the understanding she experienced in the *Song of Songs*. Her hope was that her daughters would receive some of the consolation and knowledge given to her when she heard those mysterious words of love.¹ Thus Teresa does not begin this work reluctantly or as a sacrifice of obedience as she did some of her other writings. Rather, she admits that “it consoles me to tell my meditations to my daughters.”² Even if she fails to explain the understanding of them that was given to her mystically, she reasons that her time will have been well spent in reflecting on such sublime themes.³ Furthermore, she felt that the Lord’s love is so poorly understood that people refuse to think of the mysteries contained in these words “spoken by the Holy Spirit.”⁴ “I know someone who for a number of years had many fears, and nothing gave her assurance, but the Lord was pleased that she hear some words from the *Song of Songs*, and through them she understood that her soul was being well guided. As I have said, she understood that it was possible for a soul in love with its Spouse to experience all these favors, swoons, deaths, afflictions, delights, and joys in relation to Him.”⁵ Teresa reasoned that it was wrong that women were being prevented from enjoying the riches contained in God’s words and works.⁶

Historical Context

The daring behind her *Meditations* can only be grasped somewhat if we consider the prevalent attitude in Spain at the time with regard to the Scriptures. The vernacular versions of the Bible were neither as numerous nor as important as in other countries of Europe, for the Spanish Inquisition acted as a tight check on them. There is an example of the seriousness of the situation in the life of Fray Luis de León who made a literal prose translation of the *Song of Songs*; the circulation of this version in manuscript form was one of the charges brought against him by the Inquisition and led to his imprisonment from 1572-1576.

In the fourth session of the Council of Trent in 1546, the suitability of translating the Bible into the language of the people was debated. The Spanish theologians were opposed; and though the Council in the end made no legislation about the matter, Spain, on its own, included vernacular versions of the Bible in its indexes of forbidden books. The reasoning behind this prohibition is expressed by Archbishop Carranza when he points to particular cases of error that arose because simple and unlearned people read parts of Scripture without understanding them. The prohibitions affected mainly women and unlearned people because they were the ones, it was thought, who could more easily fall into error through the free examen of the Sacred text.

The Spanish indexes that would have affected Teresa were those of the Inquisitor, Fernando Valdés, published in 1551, 1554, and 1559. In them, both the publication and the reading of Sacred Scripture in the vernacular were forbidden. It was permissible, however, to provide translations of Scriptural passages in spiritual books. The spiritual writers as a result made such ample use of this permission that the claim has been made that a Bible in the vernacular could have been constructed from the Scriptural citations that filled the pages of these works.

In light of such facts, Teresa could not have had access to

the Bible in the vernacular; and therefore she could not have used a Bible for her meditations. With respect to the verses from the *Song of Songs* that she uses, there are a number of ways in which she may have come to know them and cite them in her own tongue.

We know she read verses in Latin in the breviary and understood the meaning despite her lack of knowledge of Latin. She tells us this herself: "For a number of years now the Lord has given me great delight each time I hear or read some words from Solomon's *Song of Songs*. The delight is so great that without understanding the vernacular meaning of the Latin, my soul is stirred and recollected more than by devotional books written in the language I understand. And this happens almost all the time, and even when the Latin words were translated for me into the vernacular I did not understand the text any more."⁷

It is possible that she may have used a translation from some Office of the Blessed Virgin, from one of the many copies of the Spanish *Book of Hours*. She suggests this possibility when she says: "And thus you can see, daughters, in the Office of our Lady which we recite each week, how much in its antiphons and readings is taken from this *Song of Songs*."⁸

She may have asked some learned man or confessor for a translation. This possibility is indicated in her statement that she questioned learned men about what the Holy Spirit meant by the verses.⁹ And it is possible she may have gotten the passages from some spiritual book.

The Word of God

A study of Teresa's life shows clearly enough that she received no education in Sacred Scripture. Nonetheless, one is amazed by her knowledge and use of the Scriptures despite this lack of formal training and the limited access she had to the contents of the Bible. Without any previous understanding of

the meaning of a passage, without a knowledge even of the exact meaning of the words, the text being in Latin, she would suddenly penetrate, through mystical experience, to the deepest sense contained there and taste and enjoy it. "And, in fact, it has happened to me that while in this quietude, and understanding hardly anything of the Latin prayers, especially of the psalter, I have not only understood how to render the Latin verse in the vernacular but have gone beyond to rejoicing in the meaning of the verse."¹⁰ The obstacle to an understanding of this kind is not lack of learning but sin. "Since such persons have no love, they can easily read the *Song of Songs* every day and not themselves become involved with the words; nor would they even dare take these words on their lips."¹¹

By all of this Teresa did not mean that her experience was the criterion for judging Scripture; the contrary was true. She recognized that there are those who by profession have the obligation to explain the Scriptures and are thus required to work hard at their task; and she believed that much could be gained through their careful studies. Yet even these learned masters of the Scriptures whom she humbly consulted admitted to her with respect to the *Song of Songs* that the doctors had written many commentaries and had never finished explaining the words.¹² Understanding the awesomeness of the task of interpreting the Scriptures, Teresa at one point exclaims: "For one word of His will contain within itself a thousand mysteries, and thus our understanding is only very elementary."¹³ The attitude, then, that must accompany anyone's approach to the Bible is humility. The supreme example of this humility is found in the Blessed Virgin Mary. Once the angel had responded to her question and told her how the word of God would be accomplished, "she engaged in no further discussion." And then, in an occurrence rare in her writings, Teresa expresses displeasure with some learned men and sharply observes: "She did not act as do some learned men (whom the Lord does not lead by this mode of prayer and who haven't begun a life of prayer), for they want to be so rational about things and so precise in their understanding that it doesn't seem anyone else but they with their learning can

understand the grandeurs of God. If only they could learn something from the humility of the most Blessed Virgin!"¹⁴

In keeping with the custom followed by spiritual writers and preachers in her day, Teresa often uses Scripture in an accommodated sense. On the other hand an abundance of instances can be cited in which her use of Scripture corresponds generally with the literal meaning. Through her mystical experience, moreover, she was able to penetrate to the deepest content of the Biblical texts; and this is especially true when these texts center on such themes as: God's truth and fidelity;¹⁵ the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity;¹⁶ union with Christ in both His humanity and divinity;¹⁷ and the peace of Christ.¹⁸

Justifiably, the *Song of Songs* may be applied, as it has been in Christian tradition, to the mutual love between Christ and His Church, the Blessed Virgin Mary, or the individual soul. Generally speaking, there can be noted in the *Song* a crescendo in both the love and the intimacy between bride and bridegroom. The culmination, at least according to a large number of exegetes, lies in the total gift of marriage. If this is applied to an individual member of Christ's Church, then who better than a soul that has experienced them can understand the "favors, swoons, deaths, afflictions, delights, and joys" that accompany the ascent to total union with God?

In her reflections on the *Song*, Teresa covers only a few verses of the entire text. While admitting their perfect application to the Blessed Virgin Mary,¹⁹ she chooses to concentrate on an interpretation that speaks of the love between Christ and the soul.

Copies and Date of Composition

Jerome Gratian, who edited and published this work for the first time in Brussels in 1611, gives the reason the autograph has been lost to posterity. It seems that though Teresa wrote her *Meditations* with the approval of her confessor, a later confessor, upon hearing of the existence of so daring a work, became frightened. Gratian says that this later confessor

thought it a dangerous novelty for a woman to write on the *Song of Songs* and "moved with zeal by the words of St. Paul that women should be silent in the Church," ordered Teresa to burn it. Gratian's account goes on to say that at the moment Teresa was told to do so, she threw the book in the fire. Through witnesses in the process for beatification and canonization, we know that this cautious director was the Dominican preacher, theologian, and writer, Diego de Yanguas.²⁰ But since the incident took place as late as 1580, copies of these meditations were already in circulation and carefully guarded by persons who valued them as spiritual treasures.

The Discalced Carmelite nuns in Alba de Tormes hid their copy in the monastery. When Fr. Yanguas ordered that the copies they possessed be burned "not because the work was bad but because he didn't think it was proper for a woman to explain the *Song of Songs*," the nuns demonstrated their expertise in casuistry by giving the manuscript away, to the Duchess of Alba, who they knew would value and guard it safely.²¹

Four copies of this work are extant. We can distinguish two groups based on different renderings: the copy of Alba de Tormes (the most complete) and that of Baeza; and the copies of Consuegra and Las Nieves. The copy of Alba is the one approved by Domingo Báñez, June 10, 1575. All four are conserved in the *Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid*.

From the manner in which these meditations end, it is generally supposed that we possess the complete text excepting some lines in the prologue. These lines are missing because of the deterioration of the copy of Alba, the only one that contains the prologue.

Although none of the manuscripts contains chapter divisions, Gratian in his edition divided the work into seven chapters and composed headings for each. He, too, is the author of the frequently used title of the work, *Conceptos del amor de Dios*, rendered in English as *Conceptions of the Love of God*. But since this title is not Teresa's and she herself refers to the work more simply as "my meditations,"²² a number of editors have changed Gratian's title to *Meditations on the Song*

of *Songs*. Although somewhat misleading since Teresa reflects on only a few verses of the *Song*, this is the title we have chosen for this edition.

Establishing the date of composition has required a study of evidence internal to the text since no definite external testimony remains. The reference to Friar Alonso de Cor-dobilla, his visit and later death, indicates that Teresa possibly wrote the work at St. Joseph's in Avila before making her next foundation in August of 1567, for this friar died in October 1566.²³ Still, her reference in the prologue to "these monasteries" indicates that more monasteries had been found-ed and thus some later date. More specifically, in this line, she speaks of a personal experience of hers which took place at Easter in 1571.²⁴ The latest date that could be mentioned is August 10, 1575, when Báñez gave his approval to the writing. With respect to the earliest date, the work could not have been written before 1566 because she speaks of two books she had already written: her *Life* and the *Way of Perfection*.²⁵ The ap-parent contradiction in this evidence has led scholars to con-clude that the work was drafted at least twice. The first draft would have been written at Avila in late 1566, or the first part of 1567; and the second rendered sometime between 1572 and 1575.

Our translation is made from the copy of Alba, the one preferred by Spanish editors; but the chapter divisions and headings are taken from Gratian's edition. Those important additions not found in Alba but in the copies of Consuegra and Las Nieves are indicated in our translation by the use of brackets.

Though small in size, these *Meditations* are both fascinating and fresh in insight. They merit all the attention given to other Teresian works.²⁶ The content may be generally divided as follows:

- I. Mystical experience of "some words from Solomon's *Song of Songs*" (Prologue and ch. 1, nos. 1-7)
- II. Purpose in writing (ch. 1, nos. 8-12)
- III. The kiss: symbol of peace and friendship
 - A. false peace

III. (continued)

- a. from friendship with the devil (ch. 2, nos. 1-6)
- b. from the world and the flesh
 - from riches (ch. 2, nos. 8-10)
 - from honors (ch. 2, nos. 11-13)
 - from comforts (ch. 2, nos. 14-15)
- B. peace from friendship with the Lord (ch. 2, nos. 16-18)
 - a. imperfect kinds of friendship with Him (ch. 2, nos. 19-30)
 - b. the peace of union and its signs (ch. 3)

IV. Communion in friendship

- A. prayer of quiet and of union (chs. 4-6)
- B. effects of this prayer: the desire to serve; union of both the active and the contemplative life (ch. 7)

K.K.

Prologue

I HAVE SEEN THE MERCIES our Lord grants souls He has brought to these monasteries which observe the primitive rule of our Lady of Mount Carmel and which have been founded through His Majesty's good pleasure. For so many are the favors our Lord grants to some of the Sisters in particular that only souls who know about the need there is for an explanation of some of the things that pass between the soul and our Lord will be able to see the trial that is suffered in not having light. For a number of years now the Lord has given me great delight each time I hear or read some words from Solomon's *Song of Songs*. The delight is so great that without understanding the vernacular meaning of the Latin my soul is stirred and recollected more than by devotional books written in the language I understand. And this happens almost all the time, and even when the Latin words were translated for me into the vernacular I did not understand the text any more. . .¹

2. For about two years, more or less, it seems to me the Lord has been giving me, for the sake of my purpose in writing this work, some understanding of the meaning of certain words, and I think these words will bring consolation to the Sisters our Lord leads by this path and also to me. For at times the Lord gives understanding of so much that I find myself hoping I won't forget, but I didn't dare put anything in writing.

3. Now in accord with the opinion of persons whom I'm obliged to obey, I shall write something about the understanding the Lord gives me of what is contained in the words that bring delight to my soul about this path of prayer. As I have said, it is along this path that the Lord leads these Sisters, and my daughters, in these monasteries. If this writing is such that you may see it, accept this poor little gift from one who desires for you as well as for herself all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in whose name I begin. If I succeed in saying something worthwhile, the success will not be from me. May it please the divine Majesty. . .²

Chapter 1

Treats of the veneration with which the Sacred Scriptures should be read and of the difficulty women have in comprehending them, especially the Song of Songs.

Let the Lord kiss me with the kiss of His mouth, for Your breasts are better than wine, etc. . . . (Sg. 1:2)

I HAVE CAREFULLY NOTED that it seems from what is manifested here that the soul is speaking with one person and asking peace from another. It says: *Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth*; and next, seemingly, it speaks to someone whom it is with: *Your breasts are better*.

I don't understand why this is; and that I don't understand gives me great delight. Indeed, daughters, the soul will not have to reflect upon the things it seems we can grasp with our lowly intellects here below as intensely as it will upon those that can in no way be understood; nor will the former make it respect God as much as do His mysteries. Thus I highly recommend that when you read some book or hear a sermon or think about the mysteries of our sacred faith you avoid tiring yourselves or wasting your thoughts in subtle reasoning about what you cannot properly understand. Many things are not meant for women to understand, nor even for men.

2. When the Lord desires to give understanding, His Majesty does so without our effort. I am saying this to women, and also to men who aren't obliged to defend the truth through their learning. For those whom the Lord has called to explain the Scriptures to us must understandably work, and they will gain much from their work. But we should accept with simplicity whatever the Lord gives us; and what He doesn't we shouldn't tire ourselves over, but rejoice in considering what a

great Lord and God we have. For one word of His will contain within itself a thousand mysteries, and thus our understanding is only very elementary. That we do not understand His words when they are written in Latin or Hebrew or Greek is no surprise. But even in our own language; how many things there are in the psalms of the glorious King David that after being translated into the vernacular for us remain as obscure as they were in Latin! Thus always guard against wasting your thoughts on these things or tiring yourselves, for women have need of no more than what is sufficient for their meditations. With this, God will favor them. When His Majesty desires to give us understanding of the words, without worry or work on our part, we shall surely find it. As for the rest, let us humble ourselves and, as I have said, rejoice that we have such a Lord, that even words of His spoken in our own language cannot be understood.

3. It will seem to you that there are some words in the *Song of Songs* that could have been said in another style. In light of our dullness such an opinion doesn't surprise me. I have heard some persons say that they avoid listening to them. Oh, God help me, how great is our misery! Just as poisonous creatures turn everything they eat into poison, so do we. From favors as great as those the Lord gives us here in revealing what is possessed by the soul who loves Him and in encouraging it to speak with His Majesty and find delight in Him, we have to create fears and give opinions that manifest the small degree of love of God we have.

4. O my Lord, how poorly we profit from the blessing You grant us! You seek ways and means and you devise plans to show Your love for us; we, inexperienced in loving You, esteem this love so poorly that our minds, little exercised in love, go where they always go and cease to think of the great mysteries this language, spoken by the Holy Spirit, contains within itself. What more was necessary than this language in order to enkindle us in His love and make us realize that not without good reason did He choose this style.

5. Indeed, I recall hearing a priest who was a religious preach a very admirable sermon, most of which was an ex-

planation of those loving delights with which the bride communed with God. And there was so much laughter, and what he said was so poorly taken, that I was shocked. He was speaking about love since the sermon was on Maundy Thursday,¹ when one shouldn't be speaking of anything else. And I see clearly that the reason for not understanding is the one I mentioned (that we practice so poorly the love of God), for it doesn't seem to us possible for a soul to commune in such a way with God. These people did not benefit, surely because they did not understand, nor, I believe, did they think anything but that the preacher made the sermon up in his own head. Yet, I know other persons who have drawn out great good, delight, and security against fears, so much so that they had to offer special praise to our Lord. He has left a salutary remedy to souls that love Him with a fervent love because they understand and see that it is possible for God to humble Himself so much. For experience was not enough to keep them from fearing when the Lord granted them great favors. What they see represented here makes them feel secure.

6. I know someone who for a number of years had many fears, and nothing gave her assurance, but the Lord was pleased that she hear some words from the *Song of Songs*, and through them she understood that her soul was being well guided. As I have said,² she understood that it was possible for a soul in love with its Spouse to experience all these favors, swoons, deaths, afflictions, delights, and joys in relation to Him. It does so after it has left all the world's joys out of love for Him and is completely given over and abandoned into His hands, and when it has done this not just in words, as happens with some, but in all truth, confirmed with works.

Oh, my daughters, how well God repays! You have a Lord and Spouse with whom nothing takes place without His seeing and understanding it! Thus, even though the things be very small, do not fail to do what you can for love of Him. His Majesty will repay for them; He looks only at the love with which you do them.

7. Hence, I conclude this matter by saying that you should never dwell on what you do not understand in Sacred Scripture

or the mysteries of our faith more than I have said, nor should you be startled by the lofty words that take place between God and the soul. Being what we are, the love that He had and has for us surprises and bewilders me more; for knowing that He has such love I already understand that there is no exaggeration in the words by which He reveals it to us, for He has shown this love even more through his deeds. But when you reach this place in my writing, I ask you that for love of me you pause a little to think upon what He has shown us and what He has suffered for us, observing clearly that a love so powerful and strong that it made Him suffer so much could not reveal itself in words that should be any surprise to us.

8. Well now, to return to what I began saying,³ these words must contain great things and mysteries since they are of such value that when I asked learned men to explain what the Holy Spirit meant by them and what the true meaning was they answered that the doctors wrote many commentaries and yet never finished explaining the words fully. Since this is so, it will seem to be excessive pride on my part to want to explain something about them for you. It is not my intention, however little my humility, to think that I can get to the truth of them. What I do intend is that, just as I delight in what the Lord gives me understanding of when I hear some passage from the *Song of Songs*, you will perhaps find consolation in it, as I do, if I tell you. And I interpret the passage in my own way, even though my understanding of it may not be in accord with what is meant. For if we do not depart from what the Church and the saints hold (which is why learned men who understand the matter will examine this carefully before you see it), the Lord gives us license — from what I think — just as He does when we think of the Passion and consider many more things about the anguish and torments the Lord must have suffered than the Evangelists record. And if we do not indulge in curiosity, as I said at the beginning,⁴ but accept the understanding His Majesty gives us, I hold it as certain that we do not offend Him when we find delight and consolation in His words and works. A king would be happy and pleased if he saw a little shepherd he loved looking spellbound at the royal brocade and wonder-

ing what it is and how it was made. Nor must we make women stand so far away from enjoyment of the Lord's riches. If they argue and teach and think they are right without showing their writings to learned men; yes, that would be wrong. Consequently, I am not thinking I am right in what I say—the Lord knows this well. But as with this little shepherd I mentioned, it consoles me to tell my meditations to my daughters; and what I tell will contain plenty of foolishness. Thus I begin with the favor of my divine King and with the permission of my confessor. May it please His Majesty that as He has wanted me to succeed in explaining other things for you⁵—and perhaps He did so because they were for you—I might succeed in explaining these. If I don't, I will consider the time well spent that I occupy in writing and reflecting upon material so divine that I haven't deserved to hear it.

9. It seems to me from what she says in the beginning that she is speaking with a third person; and she herself makes it known that there are in Christ two natures, one divine and the other human. I'm not going to dwell on this, because my intention is to speak about what I think can be beneficial to us who engage in prayer; although everything is beneficial for the encouragement and admiration of a soul that ardently loves the Lord. His Majesty knows well that even though at times—and these were few—I have heard explanations of some of these words and have been told their meaning when I asked, I don't remember the explanations at all, for I have a very poor memory. Thus, I shall be able to say only what the Lord teaches me and what serves my purpose; and I don't remember ever having heard anything about this first verse.

Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth.

10. O my Lord and my God, and what words are these that a worm speaks them to its Creator! May You be blessed, Lord, for in so many ways have You taught us! But who will dare, my King, utter these words without Your permission? The thought is frightening, and so it will be frightening that I tell anyone to utter them. People will say I am a fool, that the words don't mean this, that they have many meanings, that obviously we must not speak such words to God, that for this reason it is

good that simple people do not read these things. I confess that the passage has many meanings. But the soul that is enkindled with a love that makes it mad desires nothing else than to say these words. Indeed, the Lord does not forbid her to say them.

God help me! Why are we surprised? Isn't the deed more admirable? Do we not approach the most Blessed Sacrament? And I was even wondering if the bride was asking for this favor that Christ afterward gave us. I also wondered whether she was asking for that union so great that God became man, for that friendship that he effected with the human race. Obviously a kiss is the sign of great peace and friendship among two persons. May the Lord help us understand how many kinds of peace there are.

11. Before I go any further, and so as not to forget, I want to say one thing—very important in my opinion—although the matter would fit better at another time. I hold as certain that there are many persons who approach the most Blessed Sacrament (and please the Lord I be lying) with serious mortal sins. Yet, if such persons were to hear a soul dying with love of its God say these words, they would be surprised and consider it great boldness. At least I am sure they themselves would not say them, for these words and other similar ones in the *Song of Songs* are said by love. Since such persons have no love, they can easily read the *Song of Songs* every day and not themselves become involved with the words; nor would they even dare take the words on their lips. For truly even hearing them makes one fear, for these words bear in themselves great majesty. How much majesty You bear, my Lord, in the most Blessed Sacrament. But since these persons do not have a living faith but a dead one, You do not speak to them when they see You so humble under the species of bread. They do not deserve to hear—and thus they are not so daring.

12. As a result these words in themselves, taking them only literally, would truly cause fear if the one uttering them were in his senses. But the one whom Your love, Lord, has drawn out of himself, You will truly pardon if he says them and also others, even though to say them is daring. And my Lord, if the kiss signifies peace and friendship why shouldn't souls ask You

for this kiss? What better thing can we ask for than what I ask You for, my Lord; that You give me this peace “with the kiss of Your mouth”? This, daughters, is a lofty petition, as I shall tell you afterward.⁶

Chapter 2

Treats of nine kinds of false peace presented to the soul by the world, the flesh, and the devil. Explains the holiness of the religious state. This holiness leads to the true peace desired by the bride in the Song of Songs.

GOD DELIVER YOU from the peace of many kinds that worldly people have. May He never allow us to try it, for it brings perpetual war. When such persons of the world remain quiet, while going about in serious sin, and so tranquil about their vices, for their consciences don't feel remorseful about anything, their peace, you have read, is a sign that they and the devil are friends. While they live, the devil does not wage war against them. For bad as they are they would then return to God somewhat, not out of love for Him but so as to flee from this war. Those who would act in such a way would never persevere in serving God. Soon, since the devil understands this, he would again give them delight in their pleasure and they would return to their friendship with him, until he has them in that place where he shows them how false their peace was. There is no reason to speak of these persons here; let them worry about it, for I hope in the Lord that so much evil will not be found among you. But the devil could begin to offer you another peace in small things, and always, while we live, daughters, we must fear.

2. When a Sister begins to grow lax in things that in themselves seem small, persisting in them for a long time without feeling any remorse of conscience, the resulting peace is bad. And consequently the devil can draw her into a thousand evils. Examples of these little things would be an infrac-

tion of something in the constitutions, which in itself would not be a sin, or being careless, even though without malice, about what the bishop commands (in fact he stands in God's place, and it is good always—for this reason we have come here—to consider what he desires), and many other little things that come along and which in themselves do not appear to be sins. In sum, there are faults and always will be, for we are miserable creatures. I don't say that there are not; what I say is that these faults should be felt when they are committed and that the soul should understand that there was a fault. For if the soul doesn't, the devil, as I say, can rejoice and gradually make it insensible to these little things. I tell you, daughters, that when the devil attains this, he has attained no small thing, for I fear he will go further. Hence, for love of God be very careful. There must be war in this life.¹ In the face of so many enemies it's not possible for us to sit with our hands folded; there must always be this care about how we are proceeding interiorly and exteriorly.

3. I tell you that even though in prayer the Lord grants you favors and gives you what I shall speak of later,² when you leave prayer you will meet with a thousand little obstacles, a thousand little occasions to break one rule carelessly, or not to carry out another well, interior disturbances and temptations. I don't say that this war must be going on always or habitually; but it is a wonderful favor from the Lord. By this means the soul advances. It's impossible for us to be angels here below because such is not our nature. In fact, a soul doesn't disturb me when I see it with great temptations. If love and fear of our Lord are present, the soul will gain very much; I'm certain of that. If I see a soul always quiet and without any war—for I've run into some like this—I always fear even if I do not see it offending the Lord. Never do I finish seeking to assure myself; and trying and tempting such persons, if I can, since the devil doesn't do so, in order that they may know themselves. I have met a few; to be without war is possible, once the Lord has brought the soul to an abundance of contemplation.

4. There is a variety of ways to proceed in prayer. These souls I am referring to remain in an habitual and interior hap-

piness. Yet, I think they do not understand themselves. And after I take a careful look I see that sometimes they have their little wars, though these are few. But it is a fact that I do not envy these souls. I have considered the matter attentively and see that those who have to fight the war that was mentioned advance much further in the things pertaining to perfection, without experiencing such abundant prayer, than we can understand here below. Let us exclude souls that are far advanced and very mortified after having endured this war for many years. Since they are already dead to the world, our Lord ordinarily gives them peace, but not in such a way that they don't deplore a fault they may commit and experience deep sorrow over it.

5. Thus, daughters, the Lord leads souls along many paths. But always fear, as I have said,³ when some fault you commit does not grieve you. For in regard to sin, even venial, you already know that the soul must feel deep sorrow, and, glory to God, I believe and see that you do feel it now.

Note one thing, and remember this for love of me: if a person is alive, doesn't he feel a tiny pinprick or a thorn however small? Well then, if our souls are not dead but alive in the love of God, isn't it a great favor to feel any little thing we do against our obligations or what we have professed? Oh, His Majesty is making a bed of roses and flowers for Himself in the soul to whom He gives this care, and it is impossible that He fail to come and favor it, even though late. God help me, what are we religious doing in the monastery? Why did we leave the world? For what reason did we come? In what better way could we be occupied than to prepare rooms within our souls for our Spouse and reach the stage in which we can ask Him to give us the kiss of His mouth? Happy will be the soul that makes this request and whose lamp will not be out when the Lord comes,⁴ otherwise the Lord will grow tired of knocking, and turn away. Oh, my daughters! What a great state of life we are in, for no one but we ourselves can keep us from saying these words to our Spouse since we took Him for our Spouse when we made our professions.

6. Let scrupulous souls understand me, for I am not speak-

ing of some fault that is committed occasionally or of faults that cannot be recognized or always felt by everyone, but of one who commits faults habitually without paying any attention to them, thinking they are trifles, and without any remorse, and who does not strive to make amends. I repeat that peace of this sort is dangerous and you should be warned about it. Well now, what will be the peace of those who are very lax about the observance of their rule? (Please God there will be none.) In many ways the devil will give them peace, for God permits him to do so on account of our sins. There is no reason to discuss the matter. I wanted to warn you with this small comment. Let us go on to the peace and friendship the Lord begins to show us in prayer, and I will tell what His Majesty makes known to me.

7. But before I do, I think it will be good to tell you a little about the peace the world and our own sensuality give. Even though in many books this topic has been discussed better than I'm capable of doing, perhaps you will not have money to buy books, for you are poor, or have any benefactor to give them to you. Whereas this writing of mine will remain in the house, and you will have all the material together. Souls could in many ways be deceived by the peace the world gives. From some of these ways that I shall mention you will deduce the rest.

8. Oh, as for riches! If people have easily what they need and a lot of money in their coffers and guard against committing serious sins, they think everything is done. They enjoy what they have. They give an alms from time to time. They do not reflect that their riches are not their own but given by the Lord so that they, as His stewards, may share their wealth among the poor, and that they must give a strict account for the time they keep a surplus in their coffers while delaying and putting off the poor who are suffering. This topic is not pertinent to us except that you beg the Lord to give rich people light that they may not continue in this daze and have happen to them what happened to the covetous rich man,⁵ and that you praise His Majesty because He has made you poor, and that you accept poverty as a particular favor from Him.

9. Oh, my daughters, what a great relief it is, even with respect to our tranquillity here below, not to have these burdens; as for the final day, you can't imagine. The rich are the slaves and you are the masters. By the following example you will see this clearly. Who is more at rest? A gentleman who has all he needs to eat on the table and all his clothing laid out for him or his steward who must render him an account of every penny? The gentleman spends without measure since all belongs to him. The poor steward is the one who suffers for it. And the more wealth there is the more vigilant the steward has to be, for he has to give an accounting. He will especially have a large balance to make up if he has held the office for many years and has been a little careless. I don't know how he stays calm. Don't read this, daughters, without praising our Lord very much, and always go forward doing what you are now doing in not having any possessions in particular. For without worry we eat what the Lord sends since His Majesty takes care that we lack nothing. We don't have to give an account of what is left over because His Majesty provides in such a way that what is left is so small that we are not obliged to share it with others.

10. What is necessary, daughters, is that we be content with little. We must not want as much as those who give a strict accounting, as any rich person will have to give, even though he may not have to do so here on earth but receives it from his stewards. And how strict an accounting he will have to give! If he understood he would not eat so happily nor would he spend what he has on vanities and trivialities. As for you, daughters, look always for the poorest things, which will be enough to get by on; in clothing as well as in food. If you don't, you will find yourselves frustrated because God is not going to give you more, and you will be unhappy. Strive always to serve His Majesty in such a way that you do not eat the food of the poor without serving Him for it; although one can only poorly repay in service for the calm and repose the Lord gives when there is no obligation to account for riches. I well know that you understand, but it's necessary that at times you give special thanks to His Majesty for riches.

11. Concerning the peace the world gives through honors, I

don't think I have to say anything for you; the poor are never honored very much. What can do you great harm is praise—for once it starts it never ends—if you are not careful, so as to humble yourselves more afterward. The most common way will be by telling you that you are saints, in such exaggerated terms that it seems the devil teaches these words. And indeed he must sometimes. For if the words were spoken in the person's absence, they could be tolerated. But spoken in the person's presence, what fruit can they bear? Only harm, if you are not very cautious.

12. For love of God I ask you that you never seek peace for yourselves through these words of praise, for little by little they could do you harm and make you believe that the truth was spoken or make you think that now everything is accomplished and that you have done your part. You should never let a word of praise pass without it moving you to wage war interiorly, for this is easily done if you acquire the habit. Remember how the world treated Christ, our Lord, and how they exalted Him on Palm Sunday. Look at the esteem it had for St. John the Baptist, for they wanted to take him for the Messiah, and how and why they beheaded him.

13. Never does the world exalt without putting down, if the exalted are the sons of God. I have a lot of experience of this. It used to afflict me to see so much blindness in these praises, and now I laugh to myself as though someone crazy were speaking. Remember your sins, and if in some matters people speak the truth in praising you, note that the virtue is not yours and that you are obliged to serve more. Awaken fear in your soul so that you do not rest in the kiss of this false peace given by the world; think that it is a kiss from Judas. Although some do not praise you with such an intention, the devil is watching to see how he can take away the spoils if you do not defend yourselves against him. Believe that you have to stand here with a sword in the hand of your thoughts. Although you think the praise does you no harm, do not trust it. Remember how many were at the top and are now at the bottom. There is no security while we are alive. For love of God, Sisters, always wage an interior war against these praises, for thus you will come away from them

with the gain of humility, and the devil and the world who are on the lookout for you will be abashed.

14. Concerning the peace and harm that this security can cause in your own flesh, there would be much to say. I shall mention some points, and from them, as I have said,⁶ you can go on to deduce the rest. The flesh is very fond of comfort—you have already seen this. If we could understand we would realize that to seek one's peace in comforts is very dangerous. I often think about the matter and cannot understand how there can be so much peace and calm in persons who live very comfortably. Does the most sacred body of our Model and Light perhaps deserve less comfort than our own bodies? What did the Lord do to suffer so many trials? Have we read in the lives of the saints, those who we know for sure are in heaven, that they had a comfortable life? Where does this tranquillity in comfort come from? Who has told us that comfortable living is good? What is this, that some persons spend their days eating well and sleeping and seeking recreations and all the rest they can? I'm stunned when I consider this. It doesn't seem to them there will be another world and they think that the things mentioned are the least dangerous of this present world.

15. Oh, daughters, if you knew what great evil lies enclosed here. The body grows fat and the soul weakens. If we were to see the soul, we would think it about ready to expire. In many books you will find doctrine written about the great evil found in seeking one's peace in comforts, for if we understand that to do so is wrong, we will have hope for a remedy. But I fear that the thought doesn't pass through peoples' minds. I'm not surprised since the evil is so common. I tell you that even though through comforts a person's flesh is at rest, in a thousand ways there will be war if such a person is going to be saved. And it would be more valuable for souls to understand themselves and take up gradually the penance that otherwise will come to them all at once. I have said this that you might fervently praise God, daughters, that you are in a place where your flesh cannot find peace in comforts even though it may want to. Such craving for comfort could harm you without your being aware, that is, under the excuse of sickness. You need to be

very careful about this. For one day it will hurt you to take the discipline⁷ and eight days later perhaps not. Another day or number of days you will be unable to bear the coarse tunics,⁸ but this won't be permanent. Some days eating fish may hurt you, but once your stomach gets used to it, it will not harm you. Another time you will think you are so weak that you'll be unable to go without eating meat,⁹ but by not fasting for one day you will overcome this weakness. Of these things and of much more, I have experience. It shouldn't be thought that these things involve serious fault, but that there may not be much need for them. What I am saying is that we must not find our rest in being lax, but must test ourselves sometimes. I know that this flesh is very deceptive and that we need to understand it. May the Lord out of His goodness give us light for everything. Discretion is very important, as is also trust in our superiors rather than in ourselves.

16. To return to our topic;¹⁰ since the bride indicates the peace she is seeking by saying, *Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth*, we have a sign that the Lord has other ways of bestowing peace and showing friendship. I now want to explain some to you so that you will see the kind of lofty petition this is and the difference that lies between these two types of peace.

O great God and Lord of ours, what profound wisdom! Well could the bride have said, *let Him kiss me*, and, it seems, have concluded her petition in fewer words. Why does she specify, *with the kiss of His mouth*? Surely, there is not a letter too many. I don't know the reason, but I shall say something about this. It matters little if what I say is not what the passage means provided, as I said,¹¹ we benefit from the thoughts. Now then, in many ways does our King offer souls peace and friendship, as we see each day both in prayer and outside of it; but our friendship with His Majesty is only skin-deep, as the saying goes. You will observe, daughters, the degree of love you have reached in that you will be able to ask for that which the bride does if the Lord brings you to Himself. If He doesn't do so, do not become discouraged; whatever the friendship you have with God, you will be very rich if there is no fault on your part. But we should grieve and be very sorry that through our own

fault we do not reach this excellent friendship and that we are happy with little.

17. O Lord, why is it that we do not remember that the reward is great and everlasting, and that once we have reached such close friendship here below the Lord gives us the reward, and that many remain at the foot of the mount who could ascend to the top? In other little things I have written for you¹² I have often mentioned this, and now I repeat and ask that you always have courageous thoughts. As a result of them the Lord will give you grace for courageous deeds. Believe that these brave thoughts are important. There are some persons who have already attained friendship with the Lord because they have confessed their sins well and have repented, but two days don't pass before they return to them. Indeed, that is not the friendship the bride is asking for. Always strive, O daughters, so that you don't go to the confessor each time to confess the same fault.

18. It's true that we cannot live without faults, but at least there should be some change so that they don't take root. If they take root, they will be harder to eradicate and even many others could arise from them. If we plant an herb or small tree and water it each day, it grows so strong that afterward you need a shovel and a pickax to get it out by the roots. Committing the same fault each day, however small, if we do not make amends for it, is like watering a plant each day. And if one day it is planted and ten more pass by, it can still be easily rooted out. In prayer you must ask help from the Lord, for we of ourselves can do little; rather, we add faults instead of taking them away. Reflect that in that frightful judgment at the hour of death we shall see that this was no small matter especially for those the Judge took for His brides in this life.

19. Oh, great dignity, worthy of awakening us that we might try diligently to please this Lord and King of ours! But how badly these persons repay this friendship since they turn so quickly into mortal enemies! Indeed, how great is the mercy of God. Where would we find a friend so patient? And even if a friend commits one fault, it is never erased from the other's memory, nor do the two manage to have a friendship as

trusting as before. Now then, how often will souls similarly fail in their friendship with our Lord, and how many years He waits for us in this way? May You be blessed, Lord, my God, for You show us so much pity that it seems You forget Your greatness so as not to punish—as would be right—a betrayal as treacherous as this. I think this infidelity is a dangerous state, for even though the mercy of God is what it is we also frequently see people dying in this state without confession. May His Majesty deliver us, because of who He is, daughters, from being in so dangerous a state.

20. There is another kind of friendship, stronger than this, had by persons who guard themselves against offending the Lord mortally. Those who have reached this stage have attained much, the world being what it is. These persons even though they guard themselves against sinning mortally do not fail to fall now and again, from what I believe. For they care little about venial sins; they commit many daily, and thus they are very close to committing mortal sins. They will ask: “Do you pay attention to that?” Many others I have heard say: “That’s why we have holy water and the remedies of our holy Mother the Church.” Such remarks are certainly something to grieve over very much. For love of God, take great care never to grow careless about venial sin, however small, by recalling that we have a remedy. It is not right that something good be the occasion for doing wrong. To be mindful of this remedy after the fact and to strive to use it at once is, of course, good.

21. It is a very important thing always to have a conscience so pure that nothing hinders you from asking our Lord for the perfect friendship the bride asks for. At least, the kind of friendship we just mentioned is not the one the bride asks for. That friendship just mentioned is truly suspect for many reasons. And those given over to comforts and prepared for much lukewarmness will not know clearly whether what they do is a venial or mortal sin. God deliver us from this lukewarmness. Since it seems to them that they do not commit the serious sins they see in others—and such is not the state of perfect humility—they judge these others to be wicked. It could be that these latter are much better because they weep over their

sins with deep repentance and, perhaps, with a better purpose of amendment, which will result in their never offending the Lord in little or much. Those doing the judging, since it seems to them they don't do any of these bad things, give themselves greater latitude for their enjoyments. For the most part, they will recite their vocal prayers, but not very well, because their consciences are not so delicate.

22. There is another kind of friendship and peace our Lord begins to give some persons who are totally committed to not offending Him in anything, although they don't withdraw so much from the occasions. They have their times for prayer. Our Lord gives them tenderness and tears. Yet, they do not want to give up the enjoyments of this life. They want to live a good and well-ordered life, for they think it is beneficial for them to live here below with tranquillity. Life bears with it many changes. They will be doing enough if they continue in the practice of virtue. But if they don't withdraw from the satisfactions and pleasures of the world, they will soon grow lax again in walking the Lord's path; there are great enemies we must defend ourselves against. Such, daughters, is not the friendship the bride desires; neither should you desire it. Turn away always from any little occasion, however small, if you want the soul to grow and live securely.

23. I don't know why I'm saying these things to you unless so that you will understand the dangers that lie in not turning resolutely from all worldly things. For if we do turn from them we will spare ourselves many faults and trials. There are so many ways in which our Lord begins to exchange friendship with souls that I don't think I would ever finish recounting the ones I've recognized, even though I am a woman. What would confessors or those who deal with them more particularly have to say? Indeed, some of those persons bewilder me, for it seems they have everything that is required for them to be friends of God. I shall tell you about one lady in particular, for it is not long ago that I spoke with her in a special way. She was very fond of receiving Communion frequently, never said anything bad about anyone, experienced devotion in her prayer, and

lived in constant solitude because she was in her house by herself. She was so mild in her temperament that nothing said to her ever made her angry or say any bad word, for she was quite perfect. She had never married, nor was she now at an age in which she could, and she had undergone many contradictions along with having this peace. Since I saw all these virtues, it seemed to me they were effects of a very advanced soul and of deep prayer. And I esteemed this lady highly at the beginning because I didn't see her offend God and understood that she guarded against doing so.

24. After getting to know her I began to understand that all was peaceful as long as her self-interest was not affected. But when her own interests were at stake, her conscience was not so delicate, but actually easygoing. I learned that although she would suffer all the things that were said against her, she would not tolerate anything said against her reputation even in some tiny point concerning her honor or the esteem she thought was her due. She was so overcome by this misery, so eager to know everything that was said against these and so fond of her comfort that I was amazed how such a person could live even an hour. She embellished all this in such a way that it appeared free from sin. And taking into account the reasons she gave to justify some of her actions I think I would have tried to defend her if someone had blamed her. In other things it was quite obvious that she was wrong though perhaps this judgment came from not understanding her motives well. I was really bewildered. Almost everyone considered her to be a saint, although I observed that she must have been somewhat at fault for the persecutions she underwent. And I did not envy her manner of living and sanctity. Rather, she and two other souls that I have seen in this life—for now I recall them¹³—who were saints in their own opinion, caused me more fear, after I spoke with them, than all the sinners I have seen. I beg the Lord to give us light.

25. Praise Him, daughters, very much for He brought you to the monastery where, however much the devil may do, we cannot be deceived as much as can those who live in their own homes. There are souls whom, it seems, nothing keeps from fly-

ing off to heaven; they seek perfection in everything—in their opinion. But there is no one to inform them of their faults. In monasteries I have never seen this lack, for souls must do, not what they want, but what they are told. Instead, people living in their own homes cannot know their faults, even though they would like to because they want to please the Lord. For, in the end, what they do is their own will. And even though they may go against their own will sometimes, they do not exercise themselves so much in mortification. Let us exclude some persons to whom our Lord has given light for many years, for these persons seek someone who will inform them of their faults and to whom they may submit, and their great humility leads them to have little confidence in themselves, however learned they may be.

26. There are others who have left everything for the Lord and have neither house nor possessions, nor do they take pleasure in comfort—on the contrary, they are penitential—or in the things of the world, because the Lord has already given them light about how miserable these things are. But they are too attached to their honor. They would not want to do anything that was not really acceptable to men as well as to the Lord; great discretion and prudence. It is not always easy to reconcile these two, for the trouble is that without one's being aware the interests of the world almost always gain more than do those of God. These souls, for the most part, grieve over anything said against them. They do not embrace the cross but drag it along, and so it hurts and wearies them and breaks them to pieces. However, if the cross is loved, it is easy to bear; this is certain.

27. No, neither is this the friendship the bride seeks. As a result, my daughters, since you have done what I mentioned here first, be careful not to let yourself be overcome by the second thing.¹⁴ Everything should be wearisome to you; if you have given up the most (you have left the world, its comforts, joys, and riches, which, even though false, in the end are pleasing) what do you fear? Look how you fail to understand, for in order to free yourselves from some bitterness a word can cause you, you burden yourselves with a thousand worries and

obligations. There are so many of these, if we want to please those who are in the world, that one can't bear mentioning them all or enlarging upon them, nor would I even know how.

28. There are other souls, and in speaking of them I'm going to conclude, for if you pay attention to what I have said you will understand many ways by which they begin to make progress and then falter on the road. I say "there are other souls," because no longer are they concerned about what people say or about their own honor. But these souls are not exercised in mortification and in denying their own will, and so they never get over their fear. Since they are determined to suffer everything, it may seem that the job is done. But in serious matters concerning the honor of the Lord their concern for their own honor revives. Yet, they don't seem to understand. They think they don't fear the world but fear God. They figure out how dangers might arise in that virtuous deeds could result in much evil. It seems the devil teaches them; a thousand years in advance they prophesy what could come, if doing so is necessary.

29. These are not souls of the kind that would do what St. Peter did, by throwing himself into the sea,¹⁵ or what many other saints did. In their calm they will draw souls to the Lord, but not by putting themselves in dangers. Nor does the faith they have do much for them in their efforts to carry out their resolutions with deeds. One thing I have noticed; we see few in the world, outside of religious life, entrust their livelihood to God. I know only two persons. In religious life it is already known that there will be no lack—although whoever truly enters for God alone, I believe, will not think of this. But how many there are, daughters, who will not give up what they have unless it be with security! In other writings where I have given you advice, I have spoken much about these pusillanimous souls and mentioned the harm their faint-heartedness does them and how good it is for them to have great desires since they cannot do great works.¹⁶ I don't say any more about these, although I would never tire of doing so. Once the Lord brings them to so great a state, let them serve Him through it, and not be shy. For even if someone who is a religious—especially a woman—cannot help her neighbor, her

prayer will be powerful if she has strong determination and ardent desires for souls. Even, perhaps, the Lord will desire that either in life or in death she will help others, as the holy friar Diego does now.¹⁷ He was a lay brother and did nothing more than serve; and after his death, so many years ago, his memory is revived by the Lord that he might be an example to us. Let us praise His Majesty!

30. Thus, my daughters, if the Lord has brought you to this state, little is lacking for you to receive the peace and friendship the bride asks for. Don't fail to beg the Lord for it with continual tears and desires. Do what you can for your part that He might give it to you. Realize that the religious state itself is not the peace and friendship the bride asks for, even though the Lord grants a great favor to the one He has brought to it. For only after one has been occupied in much prayer, penance, humility, and many other virtues, will that peace come. May the Lord always be praised for He gives all, amen.

Chapter 3

Treats of the true peace God grants the soul and of His union with it. Gives some examples of the heroic charity of some servants of God.

*Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth.
(Sg. 1:2)*

O HOLY BRIDE, let us turn to what you ask for: that holy peace which makes the soul, while remaining itself completely secure and tranquil, venture out to war against all worldly kinds of peace. Oh, how happy will be the lot of one who obtains this favor since it is a union with the will of God; such a union that there is no division between Him and the soul, but one same will. It is a union not based on words or desires alone, but a union proved by deeds. Thus, when the bride knows she is serving the Bridegroom in something, there is so much love and desire to please Him that she doesn't listen to the reasons the intellect will give her or to the fears it will

propose. But she lets faith so work that she doesn't look for her own profit or rest; rather, she succeeds now in understanding that in this service lies all her profit.

2. It will seem to you, daughters, that this way of acting is not advisable, since doing things with discretion is so praiseworthy a practice. You must keep in mind one point: the Lord has heard your petition (from what you can understand, I mean, for one cannot know with certainty) that He kiss you with the kiss of His mouth. For if you know this through the effects of His having done so, there is no reason to delay in anything; but forget yourselves so as to please this most sweet Bridegroom. His Majesty gives many signs of Himself to those who enjoy this favor. One sign is contempt for all earthly things, in which they are judged to be as little as they in fact are. Another, not desiring one's own good, because one's own vanity is already understood. A third, not rejoicing except with those who love their Lord. Life becomes wearisome to these persons; their esteem is for the riches they merit. And there are other similar signs that He who placed them in this state teaches.

3. Once the soul has arrived here, it has nothing to fear except that God may not make use of it by giving it trials and the occasions for serving Him even at a great cost to itself. Hence, as I've said,¹ love and faith are at work. And the soul does not want to benefit by what the intellect teaches it, for this union between the bride and Bridegroom has taught it other things the intellect cannot attain to, and the soul tramples the intellect underfoot.

Let us draw a comparison so that you may understand. There is a captive in the land of the Moors whose father is poor, but who has a good friend. If this friend doesn't ransom him, the captive has no means of liberation. What his friend possesses is not enough to pay the ransom, but the friend will have to go to serve in the captive's place. The great love the friend has makes him want freedom for the captive more than for himself. But then discretion comes along with many reasons and tells the friend that he is more obligated to himself and that he perhaps has less fortitude than the one who is now in

captivity and that the Moors will make him lose his faith, that it is not good to place oneself in this danger, and many other things.

4. Oh, strong love of God! And how true it is that nothing seems impossible to the one who loves! Oh, happy the soul that has obtained this peace from its God, for it is master over all the trials and dangers of the world, fears no one provided it serves so good a Spouse and Lord. Its reason to love Him is far greater than the reason the father and friend have for loving the captive. Well, daughters, you've already read about a saint who when a widow came to him in desolation went to the land of the Moors to exchange himself for her son.² He did this not for a son or for a friend but because he must have truly arrived at this blessed state in which God must have given him this peace and so that he could please His Majesty and somehow imitate Him. You've also read how things turned out and how spiritually enriched this saint was when he returned from captivity.

5. [I would think that his mind did not fail to come up with some more reasons besides those I mentioned, because he was a bishop and would have had to abandon his flock, and perhaps he would have had fears. Consider one thing that comes to me now and is appropriate for those who are pusillanimous and weak in spirit—for the most part they will be women. Although in truth their souls may have reached this state, their weak nature fears. It's necessary for us to be on guard because this natural weakness will make us lose a great crown. When you feel this pusillanimity, have recourse to faith and humility, and don't fail to go on fighting with faith, for God can do all. Thus He was able to give fortitude to many saintly girls, and He gave it so that they were able to suffer many torments, since they were determined to suffer for Him.

6. By means of this determination in the soul, the Lord desires to make it master of its own free will, for in no way does He need our strength. Rather, His Majesty enjoys having His works shine forth in weak people, for in them there is more room for His power to work and fulfill the desire He has to grant us favors. As a result, the virtues God has given you will

help you act with determination and forget the reasons the intellect presents and your own weakness. These virtues will prevent this weakness from increasing when there are thoughts about what will or will not happen or thoughts, perhaps, that because of my own sins I will not deserve that He give me the fortitude He has given others. This isn't the time to think about your sins; leave them aside, as I have said. Such humility is inopportune right now and comes at the worst moment.

7. When others desire to give you something very honorable or when the devil incites you to a comfortable life or to other similar things, be afraid lest because of your sins you will not be able to bear these things with rectitude. And when you have to suffer something for our Lord or for your neighbor, do not be afraid of your sins. You could perform one of these works with so much charity that all your sins would be pardoned. The devil fears this, and that's why he reminds you of your sins at such a time. Be certain that the Lord will never fail His lovers, when they take a risk for Him alone. What they should watch out for are other selfish intentions, for I am not speaking except of those who aim after pleasing the Lord with the greatest perfection.]

8. And now in our times, I know a person—and you have seen him for he came to see me—who was moved by the Lord with such great charity that it cost him many tears not to be able to go in exchange for a captive. He spoke of the matter to me—he was one of the discalced followers of Friar Peter of Alcántara—and after many urgent entreaties got the permission from his Father General. And when he was four leagues from Argel—about to realize his good desire—the Lord brought him to Himself.³ Surely he received a good reward. Well now how many discreet persons there were who told him his idea was crazy! For those of us who have not reached such love of God, it may seem so. And how much crazier it will be to come to the end of the dream that is this life with so much common sense! Please God we will merit to enter heaven; and, what is more, to be numbered among those who have advanced so far in the love of God.

9. Now I realize that God's great help is necessary for things

like this. Consequently, I counsel you, daughters, always to ask with the bride for this peace that is so delightful. With it the soul will reign over all these little fears of the world. And peacefully and quietly the soul will conquer the world. Isn't it clear that the soul to whom God grants so great a favor as to join it with Himself in a friendship like this will be left truly rich in His blessings? For certainly these things cannot be ours. We can ask and desire that He grant us this favor—and even the asking is done with His help. As for the rest, what power has a worm? Sin keeps it so cowardly and miserable that all the virtues we can imagine are appraised according to our lowly nature.

Well then, what is the remedy, daughters? To ask for what the bride asks for. If a peasant girl should marry the king and have children, don't the children have royal blood? Well, if our Lord grants so much favor to our soul that He joins Himself to it in this inseparable way, what desires, what effects, what heroic deeds will be born from it as offspring, if the soul be not at fault!

10. [Hence I repeat that in similar cases if the Lord should grant you the favor of offering you something to be done for Him that you pay no attention to the fact that you have been sinners. It is necessary here that faith master our misery and that you be not frightened if at the beginning in making the resolution, and even afterward, you feel fear and weakness. Pay no attention to these except to encourage yourselves more; don't interfere with the flesh. Behold what the good Jesus says in His prayer in the garden, *the flesh is weak*;⁴ and remember His admirable and sorrowful sweat. Now then, if His Majesty says that the divine and sinless flesh is weak, how is it we desire our flesh to be so strong that it doesn't feel the persecutions and the trials that can come to it? And in these very trials the flesh will be as though subject to the spirit. When the soul's will is joined to the will of God, the flesh does not complain.

11. The thought comes to me now that our good Jesus showed us the weakness of His humanity previous to the trials, and when He was in the abyss of His sufferings showed such great fortitude that He not only did not complain but did

nothing that would make it appear He was suffering with weakness. When He went to the garden, He said: *My soul is sorrowful even to death.*⁵ Yet, while on the cross, for He was already suffering death, He did not complain. Nor did He do so when in the prayer of the garden He went to awaken His apostles. With greater reason might He have complained to His Mother and our Lady when she was at the foot of the cross, and not asleep but suffering in her most holy soul and dying a harsh death; it always consoles us more to complain to those who we know feel our trials and love us more.

12. So, let's not complain of fears or become discouraged at seeing our nature weak and without strength. Let us strive to strengthen ourselves with humility and understand clearly the little we ourselves can do and that if God does not favor us, we are nothing. Let us distrust completely our own strength and confide in His mercy, and until we attain this mercy our weakness will persist. Not without reason did our Lord show us His weakness, for it is clear that He was not weak since He was fortitude itself. But He did so for our consolation and that we might understand how it is fitting for us to carry out our desires with deeds. Let us observe that when the soul begins to mortify itself, everything is painful to it. If it begins to give up comforts, it grieves; if it must give up honor, it feels torment; and if it must suffer an offensive word, the hurt becomes intolerable for it. In sum, there are never lacking sorrows for it until death. But as it succeeds in its determination to die to the world, it will find itself freed of these sufferings; and, on the contrary, there will be no fear of its complaining any longer, for the peace the bride asks for will have been attained.]

13. Certainly, I think that if we were to approach the most Blessed Sacrament with great faith and love, once would be enough to leave us rich. How much richer from approaching so many times as we do. The trouble is we do so out of routine, and it shows. O miserable world, you have so covered the eyes of those who live in you that they do not see the treasures by which they could win everlasting riches!

14. O Lord of heaven and earth, how is it possible that even while in this mortal life one can enjoy You with so special a

friendship, that the Holy Spirit says this so clearly in these words, and that still we do not want to understand that these are the delights You share with souls in this *Song of Songs*! What endearing words! What sweetness! One of these words would have been enough for us to be dissolved in You. May You be blessed, Lord, because we don't lose anything through Your fault. Along how many paths, in how many ways, by how many methods You show us love! With trials, with a death so harsh, with torments, suffering offenses every day and then pardoning; and not only with these deeds do You show this love, but with words so capable of wounding the soul in love with You that You say them in this *Song of Songs* and teach the soul what to say to You. For I don't know how the words can be endured if You do not help the one who hears them to bear them — because of our weakness, not because of what the words deserve.

15. Hence, my Lord, I do not ask You for anything else in life but that *You kiss me with the kiss of Your mouth*, and that You do so in such a way that although I may want to withdraw from this friendship and union, my will may always, Lord of my life, be subject to Your will and not depart from it; that there be nothing to impede me from being able to say: "My God and my Glory, indeed *Your breasts are better and more delightful than wine*."⁶

Chapter 4

Speaks of the prayer of quiet and of union and of the sweetness and delight they cause in the spirit; in comparison, earthly delights are nothing.

Your breasts are better than wine, and give forth the most sweet fragrance. (Sg. 1:2-3)

OH, MY DAUGHTERS, what deep secrets there are in these words! May the Lord give us experience of them, for they are very difficult to explain.

When His Majesty, through His mercy, desires to answer the petition of the bride, He begins to commune with the soul in so friendly a way that only those who experience this friendship will understand it, as I say. I have written much about this in two books¹ (which, if the Lord is pleased, you will see after my death) in a very detailed way and at length, for I see that you will need them. Thus, I will do no more here than touch upon the matter. I don't know whether I will succeed in using the same words by which the Lord wished to explain the matter there.

2. In the interior of the soul a sweetness is felt so great that the soul feels clearly the nearness of its Lord. This experience is not merely one of devotion moving a person to shed many tears—which give satisfaction—either by thinking of the Passion of the Lord or of our sins. In this prayer of which I speak, that I call “quiet” because of the calm caused in all the faculties (for it seems the person has them well under control—although sometimes the experience is not like this, because the soul is not so absorbed in this sweetness), it seems that the whole man interiorly and exteriorly is comforted. It's as though there were poured into the marrow of one's bones a sweet ointment with a powerful fragrance. If we were suddenly to enter a place where this fragrance was strong and not from one thing but from many, and we did not know what it was or where it came from except that it permeated everything, we would have some idea of this most sweet love of our God. He enters the soul and does so with wonderful sweetness. He pleases and makes it happy, and it cannot understand how or from where that blessing enters. It would not want to lose that good; it would not want to stir or speak or even look lest the blessing go away.

3. [And this is what the bride says here according to my interpretation, that the breasts of the Bridegroom give forth fragrance greater than that of precious ointments.]

In these books I mentioned² I spoke of what the soul must do in order to make progress, and my purpose here is solely to explain the type of prayer I am dealing with. Thus, I do not want to enlarge any more than to say that in this friendship (for the

Lord now shows the soul that He loves it in so particular a way that there is nothing separating the two) great truths are communicated to the soul. For this light that dazzles the soul, since it is not understood, makes one see the vanity of the world. The soul doesn't see the good Master who teaches it, although it understands that He is with it. But it is left so well instructed, with such great effects and fortitude in the virtues, that it doesn't know itself afterward; nor would it want to do or say anything other than praise the Lord. While in this joy it is so enraptured and absorbed that it doesn't seem to be within itself but in a kind of divine intoxication so that it doesn't know what it wants or what it says or what it asks for. In sum, it doesn't know itself; but it isn't outside itself to the extent that it fails to understand something of what is going on.

4. But when this most wealthy Bridegroom desires to enrich and favor the soul more, He changes it into Himself to such a point that, just as a person is caused to swoon from great pleasure and happiness, it seems to the soul it is left suspended in those divine arms, leaning on that sacred side and those divine breasts. It doesn't know how to do anything more than rejoice, sustained by the divine milk with which its Spouse is nourishing it and making it better so that He might favor it, and it might merit more each day.

When it awakens from that sleep and that heavenly inebriation, it remains as though stupefied and dazed and with a holy madness. It seems to me it can say these words: *Your breasts are better than wine.*

While it was in that intoxication, the soul thought it had no farther to ascend. But when it saw itself in a higher degree and completely drenched in the countless grandeurs of God, and sustained in this way, it makes a delicate comparison and says: *Your breasts are better than wine.*

An infant doesn't understand how it grows nor does it know how it gets its milk, for without its sucking or doing anything, often the milk is put into its mouth.³ Likewise, here, the soul is completely ignorant. It knows neither how nor from where that great blessing came to it, nor can it understand. It knows that the blessing is the greatest that can be tasted in life, even if all

the delights and pleasures of the world were joined together. It sees that it is nourished and made better and doesn't know when it deserved this. It is instructed in great truths without seeing the Master who teaches it; fortified in virtues and favored by One who knows it well and can do these things for it. It doesn't know what to compare His grace to, unless to the great love a mother has for her child in nourishing and caressing it.

5. [This comparison is appropriate. For the soul is so elevated and beyond the ability to benefit from its intellect, that it is, in part, like an infant that delights in a caress but doesn't have an intellect by which to understand how that good comes. For in the sleep coming from the divine inebriation the soul is still functioning because it understands and does something. It understands that it is near its God, and thus it has reason for saying: *Your breasts are better than wine*.

6. Great is this favor, my Spouse; a pleasing feast. Precious wine do You give me, for with one drop alone You make me forget all of creation and go out from creatures and myself, so that I will no longer want the joys and comforts that my sensuality desired up until now. Great is this favor; I did not deserve it.

After His Majesty granted it a greater favor and brought it closer to Himself, it rightly says: *Your breasts are better than wine*. The past favor was a great one, my God, but much greater is this one because I do less in it, and thus it is in every way better. The joy and delight of the soul are great when it arrives here.]

7. Oh, my daughters, may our Lord give us understanding or, to put it better, a taste—for there is no other way of being able to understand—of what the soul's joy is in this state. Let worldly people worry about their lordships, riches, delights, honors, and food, for even if a person were able to enjoy all these things without the accompanying trials—which is impossible—he would not attain in a thousand years the happiness that in one moment is enjoyed by a soul brought here by the Lord. St. Paul says, *all the trials of the world are not worthy to be compared with the glory which we await*.⁴ I say that

in addition they are not worthy nor can they merit even one hour of this satisfaction, joy, and delight given here by God to the soul. There is no comparison between this delight and the baseness of worldly things, in my opinion. Nor can one merit so delightful a favor from our Lord, so intimate a union, or a love so destined to be experienced and felt. How ridiculous it would be to compare the trials of worldly people with those suffered here by the soul. If trials are not suffered for God, they are worth nothing; if they are suffered for Him, His Majesty adapts them to our strength. Thus, if we are so afraid of them it is because we are fainthearted and miserable.

8. Oh, Christians and my daughters! Let us now, for love of the Lord, awake from this sleep and behold that He does not keep the reward of loving Him for the next life alone. The pay begins in this life. O my Jesus, who could explain the benefit that lies in throwing ourselves into the arms of this Lord of ours and making an agreement with His Majesty that *I look at my Beloved, and my Beloved at me*,⁵ and that He look after my things and I look after His!⁶ Let's not, as the saying goes, love ourselves to death. I repeat, my God, and beg You through the blood of your Son that You grant me this favor: *Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth*, for without You, what am I, Lord? If I am not close to You, what am I worth? If I stray a little from Your Majesty, where will I end up?

9. Oh, my Lord, my Mercy, and my Good! And what greater good could I want in this life than to be so close to You, that there be no division between You and me? With this companionship, what can be difficult? What can one not undertake for You, being so closely joined? What is there in me to be grateful for, my Lord? Rather, I must blame myself very much for my failure to serve You. And thus I beg You, with St. Augustine, and with full determination, that You "give me what You command and command what You will."⁷ Never, with Your favor and help, will I turn my back on You.

10. Now I see, my Bridegroom, that *You are mine*.⁸ I cannot deny it. You came into the world for me; for me You underwent severe trials; for me You suffered many lashes; for me You remain in the most Blessed Sacrament; and now You

grant me so many wonderful favors. Well then, O most holy bride, with what ardor I have said what you say: “What can I do for my Spouse?”

11. [Indeed, Sisters, I don’t know how to go on from here. How can I be Yours, my God? What can one who has used so unskillfully the favors You have granted do for You? What can be expected of her services? Since with Your help she does something, consider what a poor worm will be able to do. Why does a Lord so powerful need her? Oh, love! How I would want to say this word everywhere because love alone is that which can dare say with the bride, *I am my Beloved’s*. He gives us permission to think that He, this true Lover, my Spouse and my Good, needs us.

12. Since He gives us permission, let us repeat, daughters, *my Beloved is mine and I am my Beloved’s*. You are mine, Lord? If You come to me, why do I doubt that I will be able to serve You? From here on, Lord, I want to forget myself and look only at how I can serve You and have no other desire than to do Your will. But my desire is not powerful, my God; You are the powerful One. What I can do is be determined; thus from this very moment I am determined to serve You through deeds.]

Chapter 5

Continues to deal with the prayer of union and tells of the riches the soul acquires in it through the mediation of the Holy Spirit. Tells of the soul’s determination to suffer trials for the Beloved.

I sat down under the shadow of Him whom I desired and His fruit is sweet to my taste. (Sg. 2:3)

NOW LET US question the bride. Let us learn from this blessed soul that has approached the divine mouth and been sustained by these heavenly breasts; and we shall learn from it further what we must do, how we must act, what we

must say if the Lord is to bring us sometime to the experience of this wonderful favor.

2. What she tells us is: *I sat down under the shadow of Him whom I desired and His fruit is sweet to my taste. The King brought me into the wine cellar and set charity in order in me.*¹ She says, *I sat down under the shadow of Him whom I desired.* God help me, how exposed to the sun, and burned by it, is the soul! She says she sat under the shadow of Him whom she desired. Here she compares Him to the apple tree, and she says its fruit is sweet to her taste. O souls that practice prayer, taste all these words! How many ways there are of thinking about our God. How different the kinds of food we can make from Him! He is manna, for the taste we get from Him conforms to the taste we prefer.² Oh, what heavenly shade this is! And who could say what the Lord reveals from it! I recall what the angel said to the most Blessed Virgin, our Lady: *the power of the Most High will overshadow you.*³ How fortified will a soul be when the Lord places it in this grandeur! Rightly can it sit down and be assured.

3. Now note that for the most part, and almost always, God gives these sublime gifts and great favors to persons who have labored much in His service and desired His love and striven to prepare themselves so that in all things they might be agreeable to His Majesty. There may be some exception when the Lord wishes to give some person a special call, as He did St. Paul, for He brought him at once to the peak of contemplation and appeared to him and spoke in such a way that immediately that saint was truly exalted.⁴ But when souls are worn out from many years of meditation and of having sought this Bridegroom, and most weary of worldly things, they sit under the shadow of Truth, they do not seek their comfort or calm or rest anywhere except where they understand they can truly have it. They place themselves under the protection of the Lord; they desire no other. And how well they are acting by trusting in His Majesty; for just as they have desired, they sit under His shadow. Fortunate is the soul that merits to remain under this shadow even from the viewpoint of things that can be seen here below! In regard to things the soul alone can

understand—that's something else as I have often realized.

4. It seems that while the soul is in this delight that was mentioned it feels itself totally engulfed and protected in this shadow and kind of cloud of the Divinity. From it come inspirations and a delightful dew which indeed rightly takes away the weariness that worldly things have caused the soul. The soul feels there a kind of repose that will even make breathing wearisome to it. And the faculties are so quiet and calm that the will would not want them to admit any thoughts, even good ones, nor does it admit any by way of inquiry or striving after them. There's no need to move the hand or raise it—I'm referring to reflection—for anything, for the Lord gives from the apple tree (to which she compares her Beloved) the fruit already cut, cooked, and even chewed. So she says that *His fruit is sweet to her taste*. For in this prayer all the soul does is taste, without any work on the part of the faculties; and present in this shadow of the Divinity—well does she say “shadow,” since we cannot see It clearly here below but only under this cloud—is that brilliant Sun. This Sun sends, by means of love, the knowledge that His Majesty is indescribably close. I know that anyone who has undergone this experience will understand how truly this meaning can be given to these words spoken by the bride.

5. It seems to me the Holy Spirit must be a mediator between the soul and God, the One who moves it with such ardent desires, for He enkindles it in a supreme fire, which is so near. O Lord, how great are these mercies You show to the soul here! May You be blessed and praised forever, for You are so good a Lover. O my God and my Creator! Is it possible that there is no one who loves You? Oh, alas, and how often it is I who do not love You! Why didn't I merit to know You? How low do the branches of this divine apple tree reach, so that at times the soul may take hold of them by reflecting upon the grandeurs and multitude of mercies shown to it, and that it might see and enjoy the fruit that Jesus Christ, our Lord, drew from His Passion, watering this tree with His precious blood, with so admirable a love.

Previously, the soul says, it enjoyed sustenance from his divine

breasts. As a beginner in receiving these favors the soul was nourished by the Bridegroom. Now it is growing, and He is enabling it to receive more. He nourishes it with apples.⁵ He wants it to understand how it is obliged to serve and suffer. And the Lord is not content with all this—something marvelous, worthy of careful attention—for He understands that the soul is totally His, without any other interests. This means that things must not move it because of what they are, but that it be moved because of who its God is and out of love for Him, since He never ceases to commune with it in so many ways and manners, as One who is Wisdom itself.

6. In the first kind of peace, it seemed that no more could be given, yet this favor that was just mentioned is a much more sublime one. It is badly explained because my only intention is to note it briefly. In the book I mentioned to you,⁶ daughters, you will find—if the Lord wills that it be published—the favor explained much more clearly. Well now, what more could we desire than this favor just mentioned? Oh, God help me, how little we desire to reach Your grandeurs, Lord! How miserable we would remain if Your giving were in conformity with our asking! Now let us consider what the bride said further on.

Chapter 6

Treats of how the benefits of this loving union surpass all the desires of the bride. Speaks of the suspension of the faculties and tells how some souls reach this sublime prayer in a short time.

The King brought me into the wine cellar and set charity in order within me. (Sg. 2:4)

WELL, NOW THAT THE SOUL is resting under the longed-for shadow,¹ and rightly so, what is left for it to desire unless that it never lack this good? It doesn't think there is anything more to desire. But our most sacred King has still much to give. He would never want to do anything else than give if He could find receivers. And as I have said often—I

want you never to forget, daughters—the Lord is never content with giving us as little as we desire; I have seen it here.² He grants the soul in answer to some of its petitions an opportunity to merit and suffer something for Him, whereas the soul's intention was to suffer only what its strength could bear. Since His Majesty can make one's strength increase in payment for the little that one determines to do for Him, He will give so many trials and persecutions and illnesses that a poor man won't know himself.

2. This happened to me when I was quite young. Sometimes I would say, "Oh, Lord, I didn't want so much." But His Majesty gave strength and patience in such a way that even now I am amazed at how I was able to suffer, and I would not exchange those trials for all the world's treasures.

The bride says: *The King brought me*. How appropriate this name, "powerful King," is, for the Lord has no superior, nor will His reign ever end. Surely the soul in such a state will understand much about the greatness of this King; but not everything since that is impossible in this mortal life.

3. She says: *He brought me into the wine cellar; set charity in order within me*. I understand from these words the grandeur of this favor. For a greater or less amount can be given a person to drink, a good or a better wine, and the wine will leave him more or less inebriated and intoxicated. So with the favors of the Lord; to one He gives a little wine of devotion, to another more, with another He increases it in such a way that the person begins to go out from himself, from his sensuality, and from all earthly things; to some He gives great fervor in His service; to others, impulses of love; to others, great charity toward their neighbors. These gifts are given in such a way that these persons go about so stupefied they do not feel the great trials that take place here. But much is contained in what the bride says. He brings her into the wine cellar so that she may come out more abundantly enriched. It doesn't seem the King wants to keep anything from her. He wants her to drink in conformity with her desire and become wholly inebriated, drinking of all the wines in God's storehouse. Let the soul rejoice in these joys. Let it admire God's grandeurs.

Let it not fear to lose its life from drinking so much beyond what its natural weakness can endure. Let it die in this paradise of delights. Blessed be such a death that so makes one live! And truly this is what it makes the soul do. For the marvels the soul understands are so great—without its understanding how it understands—that it remains outside itself. The bride refers to this in saying: *He set charity in order within me.*

4. Oh, words that should never be forgotten by the soul to whom the Lord gives delight! Oh, sovereign favor! How impossible it is to deserve if the Lord does not give the wealth required for it. Indeed the soul does not even find itself awake in order to love. But blessed sleep, happy inebriation that makes the Bridegroom supply for what the soul cannot do; that is, set up so wonderful an order. For while the faculties are dead or asleep, love remains alive. And the Lord ordains that the soul function so wonderfully, without its understanding how, that it is made one, in great purity, with the very Lord of love, who is God. For no one hinders the soul, neither senses nor faculties (I mean intellect and memory), nor is the will aware of itself.

5. I was wondering now whether there is some difference between the will and love. And it seems to me there is. I don't know whether or not I'm speaking foolishly. But it seems to me that love is like an arrow sent forth by the will. If it travels with all the force that the will has, freed from all earthly things, and directed to God alone, it truly must wound His Majesty. Thus, fixed in God Himself, who is love, it is brought back from there with the greatest gain, as I shall say. I have been informed by some persons whom our Lord has brought to this great favor in prayer that He brings them to this holy inebriation with a suspension and that even exteriorly one can see they are not in themselves. When I ask what they feel, they are completely unable to explain; nor could they know how to do so, nor would they be able to understand anything of how love works there.

6. The tremendous gain drawn from this kind of prayer is clearly recognized through the effects, the virtues, the living faith and the contempt for the world left in the soul. But since

these blessings and what the soul enjoys here are gifts, nothing is understood—except at the beginning—for the sweetness is very great. Thus what the bride says is clear: that is, the wisdom of God supplies here for the soul, and He ordains the way in which it gains these marvelous favors during that time. Since it is so outside itself and so absorbed that it can do nothing with the faculties, how can it merit? Well, is it possible for God to grant it a favor so great that it wastes time and gains nothing in Him? No, I don't think so.

7. Oh, secrets of God! Here there is no more to do than surrender our intellects and reflect that they are of no avail when it comes to understanding the grandeurs of God. It is good to recall here how God acted with the Blessed Virgin, our Lady. In spite of all her wisdom she asked the angel: *How can this be?* But after he answered, *The Holy Spirit will come upon you; the power of the Most High will overshadow you,*³ she engaged in no further discussion. As one who had such great faith and wisdom, she understood at once that if these two intervened, there was nothing more to know or doubt. She did not act as do some learned men (whom the Lord does not lead by this mode of prayer and who haven't begun a life of prayer), for they want to be so rational about things and so precise in their understanding that it doesn't seem anyone else but they with their learning can understand the grandeurs of God. If only they would learn something from the humility of the most Blessed Virgin!

8. O Blessed Lady, how perfectly we can apply to you what takes place between God and the bride according to what is said in the *Song of Songs*. And thus you can see, daughters, in the Office of our Lady, which we recite each week, how much in its antiphons and readings is taken from this *Song of Songs*. As for other souls, each one can understand according to the understanding God wants to give him, for he will see very clearly if he is receiving some of these favors, similar to what the bride says: *He set charity in order within me*. For souls that receive this favor do not know where they were, or how through a delight so sublime they could have pleased the Lord, or what they were doing since they did not give Him thanks for it.

9. O soul, beloved of God! Do not be anxious when His Majesty brings you here and speaks so endearingly; as you will see in many words that He says to the bride in the *Song of Songs*, such as: *You are all beautiful, my love*,⁴ and many others, as I say. By these He shows He is happy with her. Thus you should believe that He will not consent to your being displeasing to Him at that time, but He will help you in what you might not have known so that He may be more pleased with you. He sees the soul lost to itself, transported so as to love Him, and that love's very force has taken away the intellect in order that the soul may love more. Indeed, His Majesty is not wont to fail nor can He fail to give Himself to the one who has given Him everything, nor could He endure not doing so.

10. It seems to me His Majesty is embellishing with His gifts this gold He has prepared and tested so as to see how many carats the soul's love is. These gifts are bestowed in a thousand ways and modes of which only the soul having arrived here will be able to speak. This soul, which is the gold, no more moves or works during this time than if it were in fact gold. And divine Wisdom, happy to see it thus (since there are so few who love Him with this strength) makes a thousand designs in the gold with inlays of precious stones and enamels.

11. Well now, this soul, what does it do at this time? This is what cannot be understood or known beyond what the bride says: *He set charity in order within me*. The soul, at least if it loves, does not know how nor does it understand what it loves. The King's most intense love, which has brought the soul to this high state, must have joined this soul's love to itself in such a way that the intellect does not deserve to understand; but these two loves become one again. Since the soul's love is brought so truly close to the love of God, how can the intellect reach that far? The intellect loses sight at that time, for the union never lasts long, but is brief. And there God sets love in order in such a way that it then knows well how to please His Majesty and even afterward, without understanding on the part of the intellect, as was said. But the intellect understands well afterward when it sees this soul with the enamel and inlays of precious stones and pearls of virtue, for it is amazed and can

say: *Who is this that is as bright as the sun?*⁵

O true King, and how right the bride was in giving You this name! For in a moment You can give riches and place them in a soul that they may be enjoyed forever. How well ordered love is in this soul!

12. I shall be able to give good examples of this because I have met some persons in this stage of prayer. I now remember one of them. Within three days the Lord gave her such blessings that were it not for my experience with her for some years and my seeing her always improve, I would not have believed the blessings possible. And I saw Him do the same for another within three months; and both were quite young. Others I have seen to whom God grants this favor after a long time. I have mentioned these two—and I could mention some others—because I have written here that few are those to whom our Lord grants these favors without their having undergone many years of trials, and thus it may be understood that there are some exceptions. One must not place limits on a Lord so great and desirous to grant favors. I am speaking of true favors from God, not of illusions or of the results of melancholy or of our own natural efforts. Only time will tell where the favors come from. When they are from God the virtues grow so strong and love becomes so enkindled that there's no concealing the two. Even without any specific desire on the part of the soul, they always bring profit to other souls.

13. *The King set charity in order within me*, set it in order so well that the love the soul had for the world is taken away; the soul's love of itself turns to disregard; its love for its relatives is such that it loves them solely for God; its love for its neighbors and its enemies is unbelievable unless experienced—a very strong love; its love of God is boundless, for sometimes the love impels it so much that its lowly nature cannot endure the love. And since the soul sees that it is now growing weak and about to die, it says: *Sustain me with flowers; surround me with apples for I am dying with the sickness of love.*⁶

Chapter 7

Explains the bride's strong desires to suffer much for God and neighbor and the abundant fruits that come to the Church from souls favored by the divine union and detached from self-interest.

Sustain me with flowers and surround me with apples, for I am dying of love. (Sg. 2:5)

OH, HOW WELL this divine language applies to what I want to speak of here! Holy bride, how is it that this sweetness slays you! From what I have known, sometimes the delight is so excessive that it seems to dissolve the soul in such a way that there is no longer any desire to live. And do you ask for flowers? What flowers will these be? Flowers will provide no remedy unless you ask for them so as to die, for in truth nothing else is desired when the soul arrives here. But this interpretation doesn't fit well because the bride says: *sustain me with flowers*. Asking to be sustained doesn't seem to me to involve a request for death but for life and the desire to serve in some way the One to whom she sees she owes so much.

2. Don't think, daughters, there is any exaggeration in saying that she dies. As I have said, it indeed happens that love sometimes operates with such force that it rules over all the powers of the natural subject. Thus, I know a person who while in this kind of prayer heard someone, with a beautiful voice, singing; and she certifies that, in her opinion, if the singing had not stopped the soul would have gone out of itself on account of the great delight and sweetness the Lord gave it to enjoy. His Majesty provided that the singing stop, for the one who was in this suspension could easily have died. But because she was powerless to stir or make any exterior movement, she couldn't tell the one singing to stop. And she was clearly aware of the danger she was in, but her state resembled that of someone in a deep sleep who is unable to come out of it and speak even though he may want to.¹

3. In this suspension the soul would not want to come out of this sleep, nor would death be painful to it but great happiness, for this is what it desires. And how happy a death it would be, at the hands of this love! But sometimes His Majesty gives it light to see that living is good for it. However, the soul sees that its natural weakness will not be able to suffer that good for long if the delight lasts, and begs Him for another good so as to escape from that one that is so extraordinary, and thus it says: *sustain me with flowers*.

The fragrance of these flowers is different from the fragrance of flowers we smell here below. I understand by these words that the soul is asking to perform great works in the service of our Lord and of its neighbor. For this purpose it is happy to lose that delight and satisfaction. Although a person's life will become more active than contemplative, and one will seemingly lose if the petition is granted, Martha and Mary never fail to work almost together when the soul is in this state. For in the active—and seemingly exterior—work the soul is working interiorly. And when the active works rise from this interior root, they become lovely and very fragrant flowers. For they proceed from this tree of God's love and are done for Him alone, without any self-interest. The fragrance from these flowers spreads to the benefit of many. It is a fragrance that lasts, not passing quickly, but having great effect.

4. I want to explain myself further so that you understand. Someone preaches a sermon with the intention of benefitting souls, but he is not so detached from human considerations that he doesn't make some attempt to please, or to gain honor or credit; or he has his mind set on receiving some canonry for having preached well. There are also other things people do for their neighbor's benefit—many things—and with a good intention, but with much care not to lose anything through them and not to displease. They fear persecution; they want to be pleasing to kings, lords, and the people; they proceed with the discretion the world so much honors. This discretion is a shelter for many imperfections; they call it "discretion," and please God it will be.

5. These persons will serve His Majesty, and they profit

much. But, in my opinion, such are not the works and flowers asked for by the bride; she looks only for the honor and glory of God in everything. Truly, I don't believe that souls brought to this state by the Lord, from what I have understood of some, think of themselves, and of whether they will lose or gain, any more than if they did not exist. They look only at serving and pleasing the Lord. And because they know the love He has for His servants, they like to leave aside their own satisfaction and good so as to please Him and serve and tell souls beneficial truths by the best means they can. Nor do they, as I say, think about whether or not they will themselves lose. They keep before their minds the benefit of their neighbor, nothing else. So as to please God more, they forget themselves for their neighbor's sake, and they lose their lives in the challenge, as did many martyrs. They are not aware of the words they say while enveloped in so sublime a love of God, in their inebriation from that heavenly wine. And if they are aware, they don't care if they displease men. These souls do much good.

6. I recall now what I have often thought concerning that holy Samaritan woman,² for she must have been wounded by this herb. How well she must have taken into her heart the words of the Lord, since she left the Lord for the gain and profit of the people of her village. This explains well what I am saying. And in payment for her great charity, she merited to be believed and to see the wonderful good our Lord did in that village.³

It seems to me that one of the greatest consolations a person can have on earth must be to see other souls helped through his own efforts. Then, it seems to me, one eats the delicious fruit of these flowers. Happy are those to whom the Lord grants these favors. These souls are indeed obligated to serve Him. This holy woman, in that divine intoxication, went shouting through the streets. What amazes me is to see how the people believed her—a woman. And she must not have been well-off since she went to draw water. Indeed she was very humble because when the Lord told her faults to her she didn't become offended (as the world does now, for the truth is hard to bear), but she told Him that He must be a prophet. In sum, the peo-

ple believed her; and a large crowd, on her word alone, went out of the city to meet the Lord.

7. So I say that much good is done by those who, after speaking with His Majesty for several years, when receiving His gifts and delights, want to serve in laborious ways even though these delights and consolations are thereby hindered. I say that the fragrance of these flowers and works produced and flowing from the tree of such fervent love lasts much longer. One of these souls does more good with its words and works than do many others whose works carry the dust of our sensuality and some self-interest.

8. From these flowers comes the fruit, the apples of which the bride then says: *Surround me with apples*. Give me trials, Lord; give me persecutions. And truly this soul desires them and indeed passes through them well. For since it no longer looks to its own satisfaction but to what pleases God, its pleasure is in somehow imitating the laborious life that Christ lived.

By the “apple tree,” I understand the tree of the cross because it is said in another verse in the *Song of Songs*: *under the apple tree I raised you up*.⁴ And a soul that is surrounded by crosses, trials, and persecutions has a powerful remedy against often continuing in the delight of contemplation. It finds great delight in suffering; but suffering doesn’t consume it and waste its strength, as would this suspension, if very frequent, of the faculties in contemplation. And the soul also has another reason for making this request, for it must not be always enjoying without serving and working in something. I notice in some persons—there are not many because of our sins—that the more they advance in this kind of prayer and the gifts of our Lord the more attention they pay to the needs of their neighbor, especially to the needs of their neighbors’ souls. For to draw one soul away from mortal sin it seems such persons would give many lives, as I said at the beginning.

9. Who will make those to whom our Lord begins to give these delights believe this? But perhaps it will seem to them that such persons are not making good use of their lives and that to remain in a corner enjoying this delight is what is im-

portant. It belongs to the Lord's providence, in my opinion, that these beginners do not understand where these other souls are because with this initial fervor they would immediately want to leap forward to that stage. But such a quick move ahead does not suit them, for they are still not weaned. It's necessary that they be nourished some days more with the milk I mentioned at the beginning.⁵ Let them remain close to those divine breasts, for the Lord will take care, when they are strong, to bring them further. Otherwise, they would not do the good they think; rather they would harm themselves. Since in the book I mentioned⁶ you will find very detailed explanations about when a soul may go out to benefit others and about the danger that lies in going out ahead of time, I do not want to mention the matter here or enlarge upon this any more. When I began, my intention was simply to explain how you can find comfort when you hear some words from the *Song of Songs*, and how, even though they are obscure to your understanding, you can reflect upon the profound mysteries contained in them. It would be bold of me to go on at any greater length.

10. May it please the Lord that what I have said may not have been bold. The work has been done to obey the one who commanded me to do it. May His Majesty be served in everything. If something good is here, you can indeed believe that it does not come from me; the Sisters here with me have seen that because of my many occupations I have written this hastily. Beseech His Majesty that I may understand through experience what has been said. Any Sister who thinks she has some experience of these delights should praise our Lord and ask Him for the latter-mentioned works and trials so that the gain will not be just for herself.

May it please our Lord to keep us in His hands and teach us always how to carry out His will, amen.

The Interior Castle

THE INTERIOR CASTLE

INTRODUCTION

IN THE WAY OF PERFECTION, Teresa assures her readers that the prayer of the Our Father leads to the fount of living waters. She then refers them to her *Life*, the book she had written in which she describes what the soul feels when it drinks this living water, how God satisfies and takes away thirst for earthly things.

Some ten or so years later, after she had labored much and increased the number of her new Carmels to twelve, she was speaking again, on May 28, 1577, for basically the same reasons, of what was contained in her *Life*. But this time the result was the command to write another book since the *Life* was then in the scrupulously cautious hands of the Inquisition. The scene of the fateful incident took place at Toledo at the Carmel founded by Teresa. Fr. Gratian, her confessor and also enthusiastic supporter as a Carmelite friar in her reform, has left us his account of the event: "What happened with regard to the book of the *Dwelling Places* is that while I was superior and speaking with her once in Toledo of many things concerning her spirit, she said to me: 'Oh, how well this point was described in the book about my life which is in the Inquisition!' I answered: 'Since we cannot have it, recall what you can and other things and write another book, but put down the doctrine in a general way without naming the one to whom the things you mentioned there happened.' And thus I ordered her to write this book of the *Dwelling Places*.'"1

Now sixty-two years old, Teresa had for five years been aware of the depth of spiritual life she describes as the ultimate stage of the mystical journey. She had come, then, to an experiential grasp of so much more than what she had written previously in her *Life*. In evidence of this, toward the outset of her *Interior Castle* she admits: "And although in other things I've written the Lord has given me some understanding, I know there were certain things I had not understood as I have come to understand them now, especially certain more difficult things."²

"Business Matters and Poor Health"

If from the viewpoint of her own more evolved experience and understanding the command to undertake such a task again seemed well advised, from the standpoint of her physical sufferings and the external problems and trials that were being heaped upon her at this time the mere thought of writing a new book was painful to her. The prologue begins in complaint. Not many things that obedience had asked of her — and obedience had asked many difficult things — were as difficult as the chore of writing at this time yet another book. "I have been experiencing now for three months," she wearily reports, "such great noise and weakness in my head that I've found it a hardship even to write concerning necessary business matters."³

In addition to this miserable health, the year was a troublesome and discouraging one; what she had struggled for zealously over the previous fifteen years could now be suppressed by the new authorities. Her work had become the center of a conflict that raged between Madrid and Rome. The jurisdictional complexities became so tangled and the misunderstandings, rivalries, and calumnies so much a part of everyday life that historians today find it difficult to judge objectively.⁴

In 1576 Fr. Jerónimo Tostado arrived in Spain with the faculties of visitator, reformer, and commissary general of the Spanish provinces and with the responsibility of carrying out

the decrees of the order's chapter at Piacenza which had directed that the houses opened in Andalusia against the will of the general be abandoned. The "contemplative," or "primitive," fathers were forbidden to form a province or a congregation separate from the province of Castile. Mother Teresa was not to leave her monastery. The unpleasant rumor was that Tostado had come to quash Teresa's work; and his presence was the cause of considerable disquiet. But the papal nuncio in Spain, Nicolás Ormaneto, who favored Teresa and her foundation, advised Tostado to postpone his visit of Andalusia (where Gratian, under an assignment of the nuncio, was on a mission of reform among the Carmelites there) and to pass instead on to Portugal. In a letter dated September 7, 1576, Teresa thus wrote to María de San José: "But, as God has delivered us from Tostado, I hope His Majesty will help us in everything. You are not maligning him in describing how he has worked against the discalced Fathers and against me, for he has given clear indications of having done so."

In June of 1577, Ormaneto died, and without the nuncio's favor Teresa's followers now felt lost. With the death of Ormaneto, the Mother foundress thought it would be better to return to her monastery of St. Joseph in Avila and to remain there, "as a kind of prisoner" in accordance with the order of the general definitory. To make matters worse, Ormaneto's successor, Felipe Segá, whose reference to Teresa as a "restless gadabout" at least demonstrated a lack of firsthand information, immediately set out with his new authority to discard the plans of reform sponsored by Ormaneto.

About this time, as well, there appeared a scurrilous pamphlet denouncing Teresa and calumniating Gratian with a number of crimes, some too foolish and lurid to be believed but yet sufficient to arouse at least faint suspicions. Again in October of 1577 Teresa was once more elected prioress of the Incarnation; she felt nothing but aversion toward taking up again such a responsibility. When this election became known, Tostado unwittingly came to Teresa's rescue and gave orders to annul the valid election. The nuns persisting to vote for Teresa in a second election were duly excommunicated. Though hap-

py to be left in peace, Teresa protested the injustice: "Learned men declare that they are not excommunicated at all and that the friars are going against the Council in declaring anyone elected prioress who has a minority of votes. . . . Everyone is shocked to see something like this, so offensive to everyone."⁵

It was while she was in the midst of all these unpleasant and disturbing events that Teresa was engaged in writing her sublime book on prayer. The work was begun, appropriately, on the feast of the Holy Trinity, June 2, 1577. Within little more than a month, she had proceeded as far as the fifth dwelling place. We may suppose this from the copy made in Toledo and ending with chapter two of the fifth dwelling place when Teresa departed for Avila in mid-July. Already in chapter two of the fourth dwelling place she had alluded to the inconvenience of interruptions: "God help me with what I have undertaken! I've already forgot what I was dealing with, for business matters and poor health have forced me to set this work aside just when I was at my best; and since I have a poor memory everything will come out confused because I can't go back to read it over."⁶

Nothing more was done on the work until the beginning of November, as she asserts at the outset of chapter four of the fifth dwelling place: "About five months have passed since I began, and because my head is in no condition to read over what I've written, everything will have to continue without order, and perhaps some things will be said twice."⁷ She completed the remaining large section, more than half the work, by November 29, within less than a month. Thus the actual time spent on this spiritual masterpiece was a mere two months.

Inspiration

Despite her trials and ill health, Teresa held firmly to her belief that "obedience usually lessens the difficulty of things that seem impossible."⁸ She prayed when beginning: "May He,

in whose mercy I trust and who has helped me in other more difficult things so as to favor me, do this work for me.”⁹ Her prayer was heard. By the time she had reached the epilogue, her mood was entirely changed: “Although when I began writing this book I am sending you I did so with the aversion I mentioned in the beginning, now that I am finished I admit the work has brought me much happiness, and I consider the labor, though I confess it was small, well spent.”¹⁰

At times she seemed to feel special inspiration, and that a work of such brilliance was brought to a conclusion so quickly is itself extraordinary. In one instance she wrote: “If what I have said up to now about this prayer is worthwhile, I know clearly that I’m not the one who has said it.”¹¹ When she turns to the topic of mystical prayer she prays: “In order to speak of the fourth dwelling places I really need to entrust myself, as I’ve already done, to the Holy Spirit and beg Him to speak for me from here on that I may say something about the remaining rooms in a way that you will understand.”¹² Among those who actually saw Teresa writing this book was María del Nacimientto who gave the following testimony: “When the said Mother Teresa of Jesus wrote the book called *The Dwelling Places*, she was in Toledo, and this witness saw that it was after Communion that she wrote this book, and when she wrote she did so very rapidly and with such great beauty in her countenance that this witness was in admiration, and she was so absorbed in what she was writing that even if some noise was made there, it did not hinder her; wherefore this witness understood that in all that which she wrote and during the time she was writing she was in prayer.”¹³

The Image of a Castle

The *Interior Castle* has come to be regarded as Teresa’s best synthesis. In it the spiritual doctrine is presented through the unifying outline of seven dwelling places among which there is a division into two sections. The first three groups of dwelling places speak of what is achievable through human efforts and

the ordinary help of grace. The remaining four groups deal with the passive, or mystical, elements of the spiritual life. By the term "supernatural prayer" (contemplation), Teresa refers to the whole series of forms and degrees of infused or mystical prayer. By the term "perfect contemplation," she refers only to those pure forms of contemplation found in the fifth, sixth, and seventh dwelling places.

The question has been raised, as one would expect in academics, as to how Teresa conceived the notion of using the castle as a symbol for the interior life. What she reveals leaves room for interpretation: "Today while beseeching our Lord to speak for me because I wasn't able to think of anything to say, nor did I know how to begin to carry out this obedience, there came to my mind what I shall now speak about, that which will provide us with a basis to begin with. It is that we consider our soul to be like a castle made entirely out of a diamond or of very clear crystal, in which there are many rooms, just as in heaven there are many dwelling places."¹⁴ Previously, in the *Way of Perfection*, with similar thoughts, Teresa had advised: "Well, let us imagine that within us is an extremely rich palace, built entirely of gold and precious stones; in sum, built for a Lord such as this. . . . Imagine, also, that in this palace dwells this mighty King."¹⁵

In an interesting account, one of her early biographers, Fr. Diego de Yepes, testifies that Teresa told him that on the eve of Trinity Sunday, 1577, God showed her in a flash the whole book. There was "a most beautiful crystal globe like a castle in which she saw seven dwelling places, and in the seventh, which was in the center, the King of Glory dwelt in the greatest splendor. From there He beautified and illumined all those dwelling places to the outer wall. The inhabitants received more light the nearer they were to the center. Outside of the castle all was darkness, with toads, vipers, and other poisonous vermin. While she was admiring this beauty which the grace of God communicates to souls, the light suddenly disappeared and, although the King of Glory did not leave the castle, the crystal was covered with darkness and was left as ugly as coal and with an unbearable stench, and the poisonous creatures out-

side the wall were able to get into the castle. Such was the state of a soul in sin."¹⁶ This was told to Yepes, a former confessor of Teresa's, when she met him by chance one snowy day in an inn in Arévalo either in 1579 or 1580. Yepes also adds with a certain self-satisfaction that "although in the *Book of Her Life* and the *Dwelling Places* she mentions this, she doesn't in either of them communicate this vision as specifically as she did to me."¹⁷ But if this vision came to Teresa in 1577, we are left wondering both how she could have referred to it in her *Life*, written in the 1560's, and about the value of Diego de Yepes' testimony. Nonetheless, Teresa's vague expression "there came to my mind" (*se me ofreció*) does not rule out the possibility of a vision as a basis of her symbol.

As described in her *Life*, she once did receive a mystical vision of God's presence and what it is for a soul to be in mortal sin: "Once while I was reciting with all the Sisters the hours of the Divine Office, my soul suddenly became recollected; and it seemed to me to be like a brightly polished mirror, without any part on the back or sides or top or bottom that wasn't totally clear. In its center Christ, our Lord, was shown to me . . . I was given understanding of what it is for a soul to be in mortal sin. It amounts to clouding this mirror with mist and leaving it black; and thus this Lord cannot be revealed or seen even though He is always present giving us being."¹⁸ Later in the same chapter it seems from her reference that this experience influenced her thinking when she compares the Divinity to a very clear diamond in which everything is visible including sin with all its ugliness.¹⁹

Whatever the speculation on matters like the above, the point must be made that the *Interior Castle* is principally the fruit of her own experience, and though Teresa makes the effort to hide her identity by referring to this other person she knows, her talents for concealing her identity were abysmally poor.

The Synthesis

Although the outer wall of the castle (the body) is ordinary,

it nonetheless may lure the soul's attention from the inner brilliant castle.²⁰ Inside the castle are many dwelling places, above, below, and to the sides. In other words, the spiritual life that goes on within the castle is a complex matter involving the individual's capacities, the diversity of ways, and differing spiritual depths. The seven stages represent only types and allow for a wide range of variations. In speaking of the seven dwelling places, we must keep in mind that "in each of these there are many others, below and above and to the sides, with lovely gardens and fountains and labyrinths, such delightful things that you would want to be dissolved in praises of the great God who created the soul in His own image and likeness."²¹ At the center of the castle is God's dwelling place.

The gate of entry is prayer.²² Prayer is a door that opens up into the mystery of God and at the same time a means of communing with Him. It actuates the personal relationship with the Lord present in the very depths of the spirit.

The first dwelling places. Setting aside those souls outside the castle, paralysed and crippled, in need of special healing from the Lord Himself if they are to enter,²³ Teresa turns her attention to those who have entered the first area. Little of the glowing light from the King's royal chamber filters into these first dwelling places. Too many things entice and distract souls here and thus prevent them from taking the time to search for the true light. "So, I think, must be the condition of the soul. Even though it may not be in a bad state, it is so involved in worldly things and so absorbed with its possessions, honor, or business affairs, as I have said, that even though as a matter of fact it would want to see and enjoy its beauty these things do not allow it to; nor does it seem that it can slip free from so many impediments."²⁴ Such people do have some good desires, however; and they even pray on occasion. Their need, as is true of everyone, is for self-knowledge and for knowledge of the beauty of a soul in grace and of the ugliness of one in sin; in a word, for some insight into the Christian mystery of sin and grace. Self-knowledge and humility grow as the soul moves onward through the castle toward the center.

The second dwelling places. Here we have rooms set apart

for those who have taken some first steps in the practice of prayer, who are more receptive to the promptings and invitations of Christ's grace which comes especially through external means such as books, sermons, good friendships, and through trials. The struggle with the forces of evil is now more keenly felt, and the time is ripe for the characteristically Teresian determination to persevere convinced that the spiritual life cannot be grounded on consolations. Conformity with God's will must be the goal of one's strivings.

The third dwelling places. To persevere in prayer and the struggle involved is to go forward.²⁵ Those who have come to this stage begin to long not to offend His Majesty; they guard against venial sin, are fond of both ascetical practices and periods of recollection, seek to use their time well, practice charity toward their neighbor, and maintain balance in the use of speech and dress and in the management of their household. They are good Christians, and the Lord will not deny these souls entrance into the final dwelling place if they so desire.²⁶ Like the young man in the Gospel, however, they could turn away upon hearing the requirements for becoming perfect. Any threat to wealth or honor will quickly uncover their attachments to these; and they are excessively discreet about their health—to the point of fearing everything.²⁷ In addition to their reluctance to part with wealth and honor, they have a tendency to be too easily shocked by the faults of others and quickly distraught by a little dryness.²⁸ Though these persons find more consolation in the spiritual life than they do in material comforts and distractions, they seldom receive the deeper, more delectable peace and quiet of contemplation except occasionally as an invitation to prepare better for what lies ahead.²⁹ They need someone who is free of the world's illusions with whom they might speak.

Dealing less extensively with these first three dwelling places, Teresa says little about prayer; nor does she give advice about methods. The impression left on her reader is that she is anxious to advance quickly to the part that deals more immediately with what God does; and she complains that while we are admonished to pray, only what we can do ourselves is explained

and little said of what the Lord does, "I mean about the supernatural."³⁰ It is in response to this need souls have of knowing about passive prayer that Teresa felt she could contribute.

The question might be raised here: is it not useless for people to read about mystical prayer and favors when they do not themselves, for whatever reason, experience the same things? In answer to this, Teresa replies that learning about God's work will lead a receptive person to the prayer of praise. Characteristically, she reasons that if she who was so wretched was led to this praise when she read of such things, how much more will good and humble souls praise Him upon learning of them. Also, she thinks that these favors superabound with love and fortitude enabling a person to do more good and to journey with less toil. Knowledge of these favors will make the readers aware of how much they may lose through their own fault. Furthermore, the testimony she gives of her contemplative experience, in which so many aspects of the Christian faith are illumined, provides the theologian with a rich abundance of material for reflection.³¹

The fourth dwelling places. The beginning of the supernatural or mystical marks off this section and presents Teresa with the problem of how to explain infused prayer.³² She first seeks a solution through an analysis of the difference between consolations (*contentos*) and spiritual delight (*gustos*); she notes that the former have their beginning in our human nature and end in God while the latter have their beginning in God and overflow to human nature.³³ The consolations, then, result from our own efforts accompanied by God's grace; the spiritual delight is received not through human efforts but passively. In this dwelling place the first degrees of infused prayer are discussed. Though there are no rules about the length of time required to reach this point, "the important thing is not to think much but to love much; and so do that which best stirs you to love."³⁴ In Teresa's thinking, love "doesn't consist in great delight but in desiring with strong determination to please God in everything, in striving, insofar as possible, not to offend Him, and in asking Him for the advancement of the honor and glory of His Son."³⁵

This contemplative prayer begins with a passive experience of recollection, a gentle drawing of the faculties inward; it is different from recollection achieved at the cost of human effort.³⁶ This prayer of infused recollection is a less intense form of initial contemplation or, as called by Teresa, the prayer of quiet. While the will finds rest in the prayer of quiet, in the peace of God's presence, the intellect (in Teresa's terminology) continues to move about. One should let the intellect go and surrender oneself into the arms of love,³⁷ for distractions, the wandering mind, are a part of the human condition and can no more be avoided than can eating and sleeping.

In a further effort to explain the difference between acquired and infused prayer, she turns to another analogy: the different ways in which two water troughs are filled. One trough is filled with water channelled through aqueducts, by the exercise of a great deal of ingenuity while the other is filled by a spring bubbling up from the very spot where the trough is. However, the worth of one's prayer is not judged by its passive character; rather, "it is in the effects and deeds following afterward that one discerns the true value of prayer."³⁸

Finally, in this dwelling place since the passive prayer is in its beginning stages, the natural (active) and the supernatural (passive) are joined. It is not unusual for souls to enter here.

The fifth dwelling places. The prayer of union characterizes these rooms, an experience in which the faculties become completely silent, or, in Teresa's words, are suspended, and which leaves a certitude that the soul "was in God and God was in it."³⁹ Such certitude is not present when the union is merely partial as in the previous dwelling place.⁴⁰

Here Teresa, never wanting in her attempts to find the best explanation, turns to another analogy. Leaving aside the castle and the troughs of water, she finds an unusual comparison as an example for explaining what is in her mind: the silkworm. Through the image of the silkworm she speaks ingeniously of death and of new life in Christ. In this prayer of union, God Himself becomes the dwelling place or cocoon in which a person dies. Once a soul is indeed dead to itself and its attachments, it breaks forth from the cocoon transformed as does a small white butterfly.⁴¹

Having made the point of the soul's death in Christ, Teresa introduces her final analogy which serves to lead her readers through the remaining dwelling places to the center of the castle: marriage and its preparatory stages. In her day, before two people became engaged, they progressed through certain stages by which they sought to know first if there was any likeness between them and then whether there was any chance for love. If these were affirmatively established, they shared in additional meetings so as to deepen their knowledge of each other. In these experiences of union, then, His Majesty is desirous that the soul may get to know Him better.⁴²

Teresa makes a final plea that love be not idle. One so intimate with His Majesty must walk with special care and attentiveness in the exercise of virtue and with particular emphasis on love of neighbor, humility (the desire to be considered the least), and the faithful performance of ordinary tasks.⁴³

The sixth dwelling places. The longest section of the *Interior Castle* is devoted to this stage of the inward journey. Teresa deals here with many extraordinary mystical phenomena. Though the spiritual betrothal takes place in these rooms, the desires of the soul at a cost to itself must first increase.⁴⁴ Through both vehement desires for God and the sufferings these desires cause, the Lord enables the soul to have the courage to be joined with Him and take Him as its Spouse.⁴⁵ Aware that readers will wonder why all this courage is necessary for something that should be looked upon as an attractive opportunity, Teresa asserts strongly: "I tell you there is need for more courage than you think."⁴⁶ Without the courage, which must be given by God, such a union would be impossible. This fortitude comes through many trials both exterior and interior: opposition from others; praise (itself becoming a trial); severe illnesses; inner sufferings, fears, and misunderstanding on the part of the confessor and the consequent anxiety that God will allow one to be deceived; and a feeling of unbearable inner oppression and even of being rejected by God.⁴⁷

Other preparations for the betrothal come in the form of certain spiritual awakenings and impulses deep within the soul.

These are of many kinds and include the woundings of love that can cause at one and the same time both pain and delight.⁴⁸

The betrothal itself takes place when His Majesty “gives the soul raptures that draw it out of its senses. For if it were to see itself so near this great majesty while in its senses, it would perhaps die.”⁴⁹ Though the soul in ecstasy is without consciousness in its outward life, it was never before so awake to the things of God nor did it ever before have so deep an enlightenment and knowledge of God.⁵⁰

Besides locutions from God with their beneficial effects, the soul may now also begin to receive through intellectual and imaginative visions understanding about the divine mysteries.⁵¹ The Lord shows it heavenly secrets. Some are so sublime that it is incapable of explaining anything about them; others can be explained to some extent. The supernatural realities that became the objects of Teresa’s mystical experience were so varied and complex that the scholar is left disconcerted in his efforts to categorize them. Accompanying the discussion of these diverse favors are also many sharp analyses and keenly perceptive rules for discerning authentic mystical experiences from pseudo-mystical phenomena. The effects the authentic favors leave in the soul are like the jewels the Spouse gives to the betrothed; they are knowledge of the grandeur of God, self-knowledge together with humility, and rejection of earthly things except of those that can be used in the Lord’s service.⁵² Finally, joy will reach such an excess that the soul will want to be a herald to the entire world that all might help it praise the Lord.⁵³

When speaking of the intellectual and imaginative visions of Christ, Teresa pauses to make some firm assertions about the human and divine Christ present throughout one’s spiritual pilgrimage. He is the one through whom all blessings come. No state is so sublime that a person must always be occupied with divinity and thus obliged to empty the mind of all reference to the human Christ. “Life is long, and there are in it many trials, and we need to look at Christ our model, how He suffered them, and also at His apostles and saints, so as to bear these

trials with perfection. Jesus is too good a companion for us to turn away from Him.”⁵⁴ And here Teresa makes an important distinction between discursive meditation about Christ and contemplative presence to Him. The inability of contemplative souls to engage in discursive thought about the mysteries of the Passion and life of Christ in their prayer is very common, she holds. But contemplating these mysteries, “dwelling on them with a simple gaze,” in Teresa’s words, “will not impede the most sublime prayer.”⁵⁵ On the contrary, an effort to forget Christ and live in continual absorption in the Divinity will result in a failure to enter the last two dwelling places. Teresa is most insistent on this. The purification of the person is realized not merely through the sufferings inherent to the human condition but especially through contact with the person of Christ in his humanity and divinity.

Through these many favors and purifications, the desires of love are always increasing and the flight of the butterfly ever more restless. These desires reach a point of extreme spiritual torment causing the soul a final purification of the spirit before entering the seventh dwelling place, “just as those who will enter heaven must be cleansed in purgatory.”⁵⁶ Not only can this intense spiritual torment cause ecstasy, as can intense spiritual joy, but also it can place one in danger of death.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, the soul is aware that this spiritual suffering is a precious favor.

The seventh dwelling places. On account of these moments of great illumination, Teresa is able to teach that there are no closed doors between the sixth and the seventh dwelling places. If she divides them, it is “because there are things in the last that are not revealed to those who have not yet reached it.”⁵⁸ In the prayer of union explained in the fifth dwelling place and the raptures of the sixth, the Lord makes the soul blind and deaf as was St. Paul in his conversion. When God joins the soul to Himself, it doesn’t understand anything of the nature and kind of favor enjoyed.⁵⁹ But in the seventh dwelling place the union is wrought differently: “Our good God now desires to remove the scales from the soul’s eyes and let it see and understand, although in a strange way, something of the favor He

grants it.”⁶⁰ Now fortified, a person lifted up to these exalted mysteries no longer loses equilibrium or falls into ecstasy, but rather experiences them as a proper object, as connatural.

Entry into these last and most luminous dwelling places takes place through an amazing intellectual vision of the Most Blessed Trinity. Teresa places much emphasis on the depth at which this experience occurs, a spiritual profundity previously unrevealed, in “the extreme interior, in some place very deep within itself.”⁶¹ Though the presence of the Trinity remains and is felt habitually, it is not revealed in the fullness of light as at first or sometimes afterward when the Lord “desires that the window of the intellect be opened.”⁶² What seems awesome is that the habitual intellectual vision of the Trinity does not interfere with multiple and diverse daily duties carried out as acts of service.

The grace of spiritual marriage, of perfect union, is bestowed also in this center dwelling place and occurs through an imaginative vision of the Lord’s most sacred humanity “so that the soul will understand and not be ignorant of receiving this sovereign gift.”⁶³ The vision was so much at variance with previous ones that it left Teresa “stupefied,” for, as does the vision of the Trinity, this takes place in that most interior depth of the spirit. In successive experiences of this grace, which is repeatable, the vision is an intellectual one. Suggesting the trait of inseparability, the term “marriage” designates the union and the degree of His Majesty’s love. It is so great and reaches such a point that the spirit is made one with God “just as those who are married cannot be separated.”⁶⁴ With no allowance for division, as there is in spiritual betrothal (likened to the joining and separation of the two candles), the union of spiritual marriage makes Teresa think of the rain that has fallen into a river, or of a stream that enters the sea, or of the beams of light entering a room through different windows and becoming one.⁶⁵

At this point the butterfly dies with the greatest joy because its new life is Christ. In St. Paul’s words: “He that is joined or united to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him,” and “for me to live is Christ.”⁶⁶ The ultimate goal, then, of Teresa’s

journey, the spiritual marriage, is a union with Christ, now no longer living as the divine Logos but as the Word incarnate, risen and connotated by the attributes of His earthly adventure, especially those of His resurrection. With the passing of time, the soul understands more clearly that its life is Christ.

Having examined the effects of this union, Teresa in the final chapter explains that the purpose of all these splendid favors is that one might live like Christ and that the fruit of the spiritual marriage must be good works. The interior calm fortifies these persons so that they may endure much less calm in the exterior events of their lives, that they might have the strength to serve.⁶⁷ The works of service may be outstanding ones, as in Teresa's case, but they need not be. One must concentrate on serving those who are in one's company. "The Lord doesn't look so much at the greatness of our works as at the love with which they are done." His Majesty will join our sacrifice with that which He offered for us. "Thus even though our works are small they will have the value our love for Him would have merited had they been great."⁶⁸

In the prologue Teresa states her intention to write about prayer, and anyone reading the *Interior Castle* would probably agree that it is indeed a book about prayer and its stages. But in a letter dated December 7, 1577, a week after completion of her manuscript, Teresa refers to her book and speaks of its theme differently. She says the book is about God ("it treats only of what He is"). This remark illustrates well how for Teresa the journey in prayer through the interior castle to the center room is nothing else than the magnificent work of God's love.⁶⁹

The Autograph

The *Interior Castle* was not revised, although the manuscript does contain the marks of censors. Between June 13 and July 6, 1580 at the monastery of Carmelite nuns in Segovia, Fr. Gratian and the Dominican Fr. Diego de Yanguas went over the work with Teresa pointing out their difficulties, cancelling passages, and making corrections. Many of

Gratian's corrections annoyed Teresa's Jesuit biographer Ribera, leading him to write on the opening page of the autograph a strong rebuke against censors of the work.⁷⁰ José Vicente Rodríguez surmises that Gratian was just killing time since he was in that part of Spain waiting for a Brief to come from Rome.⁷¹

Teresa gave the new book to Gratian to guard, for her *Life* was still at the Inquisition. Gratian brought the work to Seville in 1580 and entrusted it for safekeeping to María de San José. Sometime between 1582 and 1585, while he was still provincial, Gratian gave the work as a gift to Don Pedro Cerezo Pardo who was a generous benefactor of the Discalced Carmelites. Between 1586 and 1588 the autograph was in the hands of Fray Luis de León who was at the time preparing the first edition of Teresa's works; and it was then returned to Don Pedro Cerezo. In 1618 Don Pedro's daughter, Doña Constancia de Ayala made her profession of vows in the monastery of the Discalced Carmelite nuns in Seville. She had brought with her to the Carmel the autograph of the *Interior Castle*, and it has remained with the nuns in Seville ever since, with one exception. In 1961 it was brought to Rome for repair, and in the following year, beautifully restored, the spiritual masterpiece was returned to the Carmelites in Seville. The red-bound book, referred to by its author as a jewel, is now set like a ruby in a reliquary that has walls like those of Avila and in the shape of a castle surrounding and protecting it.

K. K.

THE INTERIOR CASTLE

Teresa of Jesus, a nun of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, wrote this treatise for her Sisters and daughters, the Discalced Carmelite nuns.

JHS

[Prologue]

NOT MANY THINGS that I have been ordered to do under obedience have been as difficult for me as is this present task of writing about prayer. First, it doesn't seem the Lord is giving me either the spirit or the desire to undertake the work. Second, I have been experiencing now for three months such great noise and weakness in my head that I've found it a hardship even to write concerning necessary business matters. But knowing that the strength given by obedience usually lessens the difficulty of things that seem impossible, I resolved to carry out the task very willingly, even though my human nature seems greatly distressed. For the Lord hasn't given me so much virtue that my nature in the midst of its struggle with continual sickness and duties of so many kinds doesn't feel strong aversion toward such a task. May He, in whose mercy I trust and who has helped me in other more difficult things so as to favor me, do this work for me.

2. Indeed, I don't think I have much more to say than what I've said in other things they have ordered me to write;¹ rather, I fear that the things I write about will be nearly all alike. I'm, literally, just like the parrots that are taught to speak; they know no more than what they hear or are shown, and they often repeat it. If the Lord wants me to say something new, His Majesty will provide. Or, He will be pleased to make me remember what I have said at other times, for I would be happy even with this. My memory is so poor that I would be glad if

I could repeat, in case they've been lost, some of the things which I was told were well said.² If the Lord doesn't make me remember, I will gain just by tiring myself and getting a worse headache for the sake of obedience—even if no one draws any benefit from what I say.

3. And so I'm beginning to comply today, the feast of the most Blessed Trinity, in the year 1577, in this Carmelite monastery of St. Joseph in Toledo where I am at present.³ In all that I say I submit to the opinion of the ones who ordered me to write, for they are persons of great learning.⁴ If I should say something that isn't in conformity with what the holy Roman Catholic Church holds, it will be through ignorance and not through malice. This can be held as certain, and also that through the goodness of God I always am, and will be, and have been subject to her. May He be always blessed and glorified, amen.

4. The one who ordered me to write told me that the nuns in these monasteries of our Lady of Mt. Carmel need someone to answer their questions about prayer and that he thought they would better understand the language used between women, and that because of the love they bore me they would pay more attention to what I would tell them. I thus understood that it was important for me to manage to say something. So, I shall be speaking to them while I write; it's nonsense to think that what I say could matter to other persons. Our Lord will be granting me favor enough if some of these nuns benefit by praising Him a little more. His Majesty well knows that I don't aim after anything else. And it should be very clear that if I manage to say something well the Sisters will understand that this does not come from me since there would be no foundation for it, unless the Lord gave it to me; otherwise they would have as little intelligence as I little ability for such things.

THE FIRST DWELLING PLACES

Contains Two Chapters

Chapter 1

Discusses the beauty and dignity of our souls. Draws a comparison in order to explain, and speaks of the benefit that comes from understanding this truth and knowing about the favors we receive from God and how the door to this castle is prayer.

TODAY WHILE BESEECHING our Lord to speak for me because I wasn't able to think of anything to say nor did I know how to begin to carry out this obedience, there came to my mind what I shall now speak about, that which will provide us with a basis to begin with. It is that we consider our soul to be like a castle made entirely out of a diamond or of very clear crystal, in which there are many rooms, just as in heaven there are many dwelling places.¹ For in reflecting upon it carefully, Sisters, we realize that the soul of the just person is nothing else but a paradise where the Lord says He finds His delight.² So then, what do you think that abode will be like where a King so powerful, so wise, so pure, so full of all good things takes His delight? I don't find anything comparable to the magnificent beauty of a soul and its marvelous capacity. Indeed, our intellects, however keen, can hardly comprehend it, just as they cannot comprehend God; but He Himself says that He created us in His own image and likeness.³

Well if this is true, as it is, there is no reason to tire ourselves in trying to comprehend the beauty of this castle. Since this

castle is a creature and the difference, therefore, between it and God is the same as that between the Creator and His creature, His Majesty in saying that the soul is made in His own image makes it almost impossible for us to understand the sublime dignity and beauty of the soul.

2. It is a shame and unfortunate that through our own fault we don't understand ourselves or know who we are. Wouldn't it show great ignorance, my daughters, if someone when asked who he was didn't know, and didn't know his father or mother or from what country he came? Well now, if this would be so extremely stupid, we are incomparably more so when we do not strive to know who we are, but limit ourselves to considering only roughly these bodies. Because we have heard and because faith tells us so, we know we have souls. But we seldom consider the precious things that can be found in this soul, or who dwells within it, or its high value. Consequently, little effort is made to preserve its beauty. All our attention is taken up with the plainness of the diamond's setting or the outer wall of the castle; that is, with these bodies of ours.

3. Well, let us consider that this castle has, as I said,⁴ many dwelling places: some up above, others down below, others to the sides; and in the center and middle is the main dwelling place where the very secret exchanges between God and the soul take place.

It's necessary that you keep this comparison in mind. Perhaps God will be pleased to let me use it to explain something to you about the favors He is happy to grant souls and the differences between these favors. I shall explain them according to what I have understood as possible. For it is impossible that anyone understand them all since there are many; how much more so for someone as wretched as I. It will be a great consolation when the Lord grants them to you if you know that they are possible; and for anyone to whom He doesn't, it will be a great consolation to praise His wonderful goodness. Just as it doesn't do us any harm to reflect upon the things there are in heaven and what the blessed enjoy—but rather we rejoice and strive to attain what they enjoy—it doesn't do us any harm to see that it is possible in this exile for

so great a God to commune with such foul-smelling worms; and, upon seeing this, come to love a goodness so perfect and a mercy so immeasurable. I hold as certain that anyone who might be harmed by knowing that God can grant this favor in this exile would be very much lacking in humility and love of neighbor. Otherwise, how could we fail to be happy that God grants these favors to our brother? His doing so is no impediment toward His granting them to us, and His Majesty can reveal His grandeurs to whomever He wants. Sometimes He does so merely to show forth His glory, as He said of the blind man whose sight He restored when His apostles asked Him if the blindness resulted from the man's sins or those of his parents.⁵ Hence, He doesn't grant them because the sanctity of the recipients is greater than that of those who don't receive them but so that His glory may be known, as we see in St. Paul and the Magdalene, and that we might praise Him for His work in creatures.

4. One could say that these favors seem to be impossible and that it is good not to scandalize the weak. Less is lost when the weak do not believe in them than when the favors fail to benefit those to whom God grants them; and these latter will be delighted and awakened through these favors to a greater love of Him who grants so many gifts and whose power and majesty is so great. Moreover, I know I am speaking to those for whom this danger does not exist, for they know and believe that God grants even greater signs of His love. I know that whoever does not believe in these favors will have no experience of them, for God doesn't like us to put a limit on His works. And so, Sisters, those of you whom the Lord doesn't lead by this path should never doubt His generosity.

5. Well, getting back to our beautiful and delightful castle we must see how we can enter it. It seems I'm saying something foolish. For if this castle is the soul, clearly one doesn't have to enter it since it is within oneself. How foolish it would seem were we to tell someone to enter a room he is already in. But you must understand that there is a great difference in the ways one may be inside the castle. For there are many souls who are in the outer courtyard—which is where the guards

stay—and don't care at all about entering the castle, nor do they know what lies within that most precious place, nor who is within, nor even how many rooms it has. You have already heard in some books on prayer that the soul is advised to enter within itself;⁶ well that's the very thing I'm advising.

6. Not long ago a very learned man told me that souls who do not practice prayer are like people with paralysed or crippled bodies; even though they have hands and feet they cannot give orders to these hands and feet.⁷ Thus there are souls so ill and so accustomed to being involved in external matters that there is no remedy, nor does it seem they can enter within themselves. They are now so used to dealing always with the insects and vermin that are in the wall surrounding the castle that they have become almost like them. And though they have so rich a nature and the power to converse with none other than God, there is no remedy. If these souls do not strive to understand and cure their great misery, they will be changed into statues of salt, unable to turn their heads to look at themselves, just as Lot's wife was changed for having turned her head.⁸

7. Insofar as I can understand the door of entry to this castle is prayer and reflection. I don't mean to refer to mental more than vocal prayer, for since vocal prayer is prayer it must be accompanied by reflection. A prayer in which a person is not aware of whom he is speaking to, what he is asking, who it is who is asking and of whom, I do not call prayer however much the lips move. Sometimes it will be so without this reflection, provided that the soul has these reflections at other times. Nonetheless, anyone who has the habit of speaking before God's majesty as though he were speaking to a slave, without being careful to see how he is speaking, but saying whatever comes to his head and whatever he has learned from saying at other times, in my opinion is not praying. Please God, may no Christian pray in this way. Among yourselves, Sisters, I hope in His Majesty that you will not do so, for the custom you have of being occupied with interior things is quite a good safeguard against falling and carrying on in this way like brute beasts.

8. Well now, we are not speaking to these crippled souls, for

if the Lord Himself doesn't come to order them to get up—as He did the man who waited at the side of the pool for thirty years⁹—they are quite unfortunate and in serious danger. But we are speaking to other souls that, in the end, enter the castle. For even though they are very involved in the world, they have good desires and sometimes, though only once in a while, they entrust themselves to our Lord and reflect on who they are, although in a rather hurried fashion. During the period of a month they will sometimes pray, but their minds are then filled with business matters which ordinarily occupy them. They are so attached to these things that where their treasure lies their heart goes also.¹⁰ Sometimes they do put all these things aside, and the self-knowledge and awareness that they are not proceeding correctly in order to get to the door is important. Finally, they enter the first, lower rooms. But so many reptiles get in with them that they are prevented from seeing the beauty of the castle and from calming down; they have done quite a bit just by having entered.

9. You may have been thinking, daughters, that this is irrelevant to you since by the Lord's goodness you are not among these people. You'll have to have patience, for I wouldn't know how to explain my understanding of some interior things about prayer if not in this way. And may it even please the Lord that I succeed in saying something, for what I want to explain to you is very difficult to understand without experience. If you have experience you will see that one cannot avoid touching upon things that—please God, through His mercy—do not pertain to us.

Chapter 2

Treats of how ugly a soul is when in mortal sin and how God wanted to let a certain person know something about this. Discusses, also, some matters on the theme of self-knowledge. This chapter is beneficial, for there are noteworthy points. Explains what is meant by these dwelling places.

BEFORE GOING ON I want to say that you should consider what it would mean to this so brilliantly shining and beautiful castle, this pearl from the Orient, this tree of life planted in the very living waters of life¹—that is, in God—to fall into mortal sin; there's no darker darkness nor anything more obscure and black. You shouldn't want to know anything else than the fact that, although the very sun that gave the soul so much brilliance and beauty is still in the center, the soul is as though it were not there to share in these things. Yet, it is as capable of enjoying His Majesty as is crystal capable of reflecting the sun's brilliance. Nothing helps such a soul; and as a result all the good works it might do while in mortal sin are fruitless for the attainment of glory. Since these works do not proceed from that principle, which is God, who is the cause of our virtue being really virtue, and are separated from Him, they cannot be pleasing in His sight. Since, after all, the intention of anyone who commits a mortal sin is to please the devil, who is darkness itself, not God, the poor soul becomes darkness itself.

2. I know a person to whom our Lord wanted to show what a soul in mortal sin was like.² That person says that in her opinion if this were understood it would be impossible to sin, even though a soul would have to undergo the greatest trials imaginable in order to flee the occasions. So the Lord gave her a strong desire that all might understand this. May He give you, daughters, the desire to beseech Him earnestly for those who are in this state, who have become total darkness, and whose works have become darkness also. For just as all the streams that flow from a crystal-clear fount are also clear, the works of

a soul in grace, because they proceed from this fount of life, in which the soul is planted like a tree, are most pleasing in the eyes of both God and man. There would be no freshness, no fruit, if it were not for this fount sustaining the tree, preventing it from drying up, and causing it to produce good fruit. Thus in the case of a soul that through its own fault withdraws from this fount and plants itself in a place where the water is black and foul-smelling, everything that flows from it is equally wretched and filthy.

3. It should be kept in mind here that the fount, the shining sun that is in the center of the soul, does not lose its beauty and splendor; it is always present in the soul, and nothing can take away its loveliness. But if a black cloth is placed over a crystal that is in the sun, obviously the sun's brilliance will have no effect on the crystal even though the sun is shining on it.³

4. O souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ! Understand and take pity on yourselves. How is it possible that in realizing these things you don't strive to remove the pitch from this crystal? See that if your life comes to an end you will never again enjoy this light. O Jesus, how sad a thing it is to see a soul separated from this light! How miserable is the state of those poor rooms within the castle! How disturbed the senses are, that is, the people who live in these rooms! And in the faculties, that is, among the custodians, the stewards, and the chief waiters, what blindness, what bad management! In sum, since the tree is planted where the devil is, what fruit can it bear?

5. I once heard of a spiritual man who was not surprised at things done by a person in mortal sin, but at what was not done. May God in His mercy deliver us from so great an evil. There is nothing, while we are living, that deserves this name "evil," except mortal sin, for such sin carries in its wake everlasting evils. This, daughters, is what we must go about in fear of and what we must ask God in our prayers to protect us against. For if He doesn't guard the city, our labor will be in vain⁴ since we are vanity itself.

That person I mentioned⁵ said she received two blessings from the favor God granted her: the first, an intense fear of offending Him, and so in seeing such terrible dangers she

always went about begging Him not to let her fall; the second, a mirror for humility, in which she saw how none of our good deeds has its principle from ourselves but from this fount in which the tree, symbolizing our souls, is planted and from this sun that gives warmth to our works. She says that this truth was represented to her so clearly that in doing something good, or seeing it done, she gave heed to the source and understood how without this help we could do nothing. As a result she would begin immediately to praise God and usually not think of herself in any good thing that she did.

6. The time you spend in reading this, or I in writing it, Sisters, would not be lost if we were left with these two blessings. Learned and wise men know about these things very well, but everything is necessary for our womanly dullness of mind; and so perhaps the Lord wills that we get to know comparisons like these. May it please His goodness to give us grace to profit by them.

7. These interior matters are so obscure for our minds that anyone who knows as little as I will be forced to say many superfluous and even foolish things in order to say something that's right. Whoever reads this must have patience, for I have to have it in order to write about what I don't know. Indeed, sometimes I take up the paper like a simpleton, for I don't know what to say or how to begin. I understand well that it's important for you that I explain some things about the interior life as best I can. We always hear about what a good thing prayer is, and our constitutions oblige us to spend so many hours in prayer.⁶ Yet only what we ourselves can do in prayer is explained to us; little is explained about what the Lord does in a soul, I mean about the supernatural.⁷ By speaking about this heavenly interior building and explaining and considering it in many ways we shall find great comfort. It is so little understood by mortals, even though many walk through it. And although in other things I've written the Lord has given me some understanding,⁸ I know there were certain things I had not understood as I have come to understand them now, especially certain more difficult things. The trouble is that before discussing them, as I have said,⁹ I will have to repeat matters

that are well known; on account of my stupidity things can't be otherwise.

8. Well now let's get back to our castle with its many dwelling places. You mustn't think of these dwelling places in such a way that each one would follow in file after the other; but turn your eyes toward the center, which is the room or royal chamber where the King stays, and think of how a palmetto¹⁰ has many leaves surrounding and covering the tasty part that can be eaten. So here, surrounding this center room are many other rooms; and the same holds true for those above. The things of the soul must always be considered as plentiful, spacious, and large; to do so is not an exaggeration. The soul is capable of much more than we can imagine, and the sun that is in this royal chamber shines in all parts. It is very important for any soul that practices prayer, whether little or much, not to hold itself back and stay in one corner. Let it walk through these dwelling places which are up above, down below, and to the sides, since God has given it such great dignity. Don't force it to stay a long time in one room alone. Oh, but if it is in the room of self-knowledge! How necessary this room is—see that you understand me—even for those whom the Lord has brought into the very dwelling place where He abides. For never, however exalted the soul may be, is anything else fitting for it; nor could it be even were the soul to so desire. For humility, like the bee making honey in the beehive, is always at work. Without it, everything goes wrong. But let's remember that the bee doesn't fail to leave the beehive and fly about gathering nectar from the flowers. So it is with the soul in the room of self-knowledge; let it believe me and fly sometimes to ponder the grandeur and majesty of its God. Here it will discover its lowliness better than by thinking of itself, and be freer from the vermin that enter the first rooms, those of self-knowledge. For even though, as I say, it is by the mercy of God that a person practices self-knowledge, that which applies in lesser matters applies so much more in greater ones, as they say. And believe me, we shall practice much better virtue through God's help than by being tied down to our own misery.

9. I don't know if this has been explained well. Knowing

ourselves is something so important that I wouldn't want any relaxation ever in this regard, however high you may have climbed into the heavens. While we are on this earth nothing is more important to us than humility. So I repeat that it is good, indeed very good, to try to enter first into the room where self-knowledge is dealt with rather than fly off to other rooms. This is the right road, and if we can journey along a safe and level path, why should we want wings to fly? Rather, let's strive to make more progress in self-knowledge. In my opinion we shall never completely know ourselves if we don't strive to know God. By gazing at His grandeur, we get in touch with our own lowliness; by looking at His purity, we shall see our own filth; by pondering His humility, we shall see how far we are from being humble.

10. Two advantages come from such activity. First, it's clear that something white seems much whiter when next to something black, and vice versa with the black next to the white. The second is that our intellects and wills, dealing in turn now with self now with God, become nobler and better prepared for every good. And it would be disadvantageous for us never to get out of the mire of our miseries. As we said of those who are in mortal sin, that their streams are black and foul-smelling, so it is here; although not entirely—God deliver us—for we are just making a comparison. If we are always fixed on our earthly misery, the stream will never flow free from the mud of fears, faintheartedness, and cowardice. I would be looking to see if I'm being watched or not; if by taking this path things will turn out badly for me; whether it might be pride to dare begin a certain work; whether it would be good for a person so miserable to engage in something as lofty as prayer; whether I might be judged better than others if I don't follow the path they all do. I'd be thinking that extremes are not good, even in the practice of virtue; that, since I am such a sinner, I might have a greater fall; that perhaps I would not advance and would do harm to good people; that someone like myself has no need of anything special.

11. Oh, God help me, daughters, how many souls must have been made to suffer great loss in this way by the devil!

These souls think that all such fears stem from humility. And there are many others I could mention. The fears come from our not understanding ourselves completely. They distort self-knowledge; and I'm not surprised if we never get free from ourselves, for this lack of freedom from ourselves, and even more, is what can be feared. So I say, daughters, that we should set our eyes on Christ, our Good, and on His saints. There we shall learn true humility, the intellect will be enhanced, as I have said,¹¹ and self-knowledge will not make one base and cowardly. Even though this is the first dwelling place, it is very rich and so precious that if the soul slips away from the vermin within it, nothing will be left to do but advance. Terrible are the wiles and deceits used by the devil so that souls may not know themselves or understand their own paths.

12. I could give some very good proofs from experience of the wiles the devil uses in these first dwelling places. Thus I say that you should think not in terms of just a few rooms but in terms of a million;¹² for souls, all with good intentions, enter here in many ways. But since the devil always has such a bad intention, he must have in each room many legions of devils to fight off souls when they try to go from one room to the other. Since the poor soul doesn't know this, the devil plays tricks on it in a thousand ways. He's not so successful with those who have advanced closer to where the King dwells. But since in the first rooms souls are still absorbed in the world and engulfed in their pleasures and vanities, with their honors and pretenses, their vassals (which are these senses and faculties) don't have the strength God gave human nature in the beginning. And these souls are easily conquered, even though they may go about with desires not to offend God and though they do perform good works. Those who see themselves in this state must approach His Majesty as often as possible. They must take His Blessed Mother and His saints as intercessors so that these intercessors may fight for them, for the soul's vassals have little strength to defend themselves. Truly, in all states it's necessary that strength come to us from God. May His Majesty through His mercy give it to us, amen.

13. How miserable the life in which we live! Because

elsewhere I have said a great deal about the harm done to us by our failure to understand well this humility and self-knowledge,¹³ I'll tell you no more about it here, even though this self-knowledge is the most important thing for us. Please God, I may have now said something beneficial for you.

14. You must note that hardly any of the light coming from the King's royal chamber reaches these first dwelling places. Even though they are not dark and black, as when the soul is in sin, they nevertheless are in some way darkened so that the soul cannot see the light. The darkness is not caused by a flaw in the room—for I don't know how to explain myself—but by so many bad things like snakes and vipers and poisonous creatures that enter with the soul and don't allow it to be aware of the light. It's as if a person were to enter a place where the sun is shining but be hardly able to open his eyes because of the mud in them. The room is bright but he doesn't enjoy it because of the impediment of things like these wild animals or beasts that make him close his eyes to everything but them. So, I think, must be the condition of the soul. Even though it may not be in a bad state, it is so involved in worldly things and so absorbed with its possessions, honor, or business affairs, as I have said,¹⁴ that even though as a matter of fact it would want to see and enjoy its beauty these things do not allow it to; nor does it seem that it can slip free from so many impediments. If a person is to enter the second dwelling places, it is important that he strive to give up unnecessary things and business affairs. Each one should do this in conformity with his state in life. It is something so important in order for him to reach the main dwelling place that if he doesn't begin doing this I hold that it will be impossible for him to get there. And it will be even impossible for him to stay where he is without danger even though he has entered the castle, for in the midst of such poisonous creatures one cannot help but be bitten at one time or another.

15. Now then, what would happen, daughters, if we who are already free from these snares, as we are, and have entered much further into the castle to other secret dwelling places should turn back through our own fault and go out to this tumult? There are, because of our sins, many persons to whom

God has granted favors who through their own fault have fallen back into this misery. In the monastery we are free with respect to exterior matters; in interior matters may it please the Lord that we also be free, and may He free us. Guard yourselves, my daughters, from extraneous cares. Remember that there are few dwelling places in this castle in which the devils do not wage battle. True, in some rooms the guards (which I believe I have said are the faculties)¹⁵ have the strength to fight; but it is very necessary that we don't grow careless in recognizing the wiles of the devil, and that he not deceive us by changing himself into an angel of light.¹⁶ There's a host of things he can do to cause us harm; he enters little by little, and until he's done the harm we don't recognize him.

16. I've already told you elsewhere¹⁷ that he's like a noiseless file, that we need to recognize him at the outset. Let me say something that will explain this better for you.

He gives a Sister various impulses toward penance, for it seems to her she has no rest except when she is tormenting herself. This may be a good beginning; but if the prioress has ordered that no penance be done without permission, and the devil makes the Sister think that in a practice that's so good one can be rightly daring, and she secretly gives herself up to such a penitential life that she loses her health and doesn't even observe what the rule commands, you can see clearly where all this good will end up.

He imbues another with a very great zeal for perfection. Such zeal is in itself good. But it could follow that every little fault the Sisters commit will seem to her a serious breach; and she is careful to observe whether they commit them, and then informs the prioress. It could even happen at times that she doesn't see her own faults because of her intense zeal for the religious observance. Since the other Sisters don't understand what's going on within her and see all this concern, they might not accept her zeal so well.

17. What the devil is hereby aiming after is no small thing: the cooling of the charity and love the Sisters have for one another. This would cause serious harm. Let us understand, my daughters, that true perfection consists in love of God and

neighbor; the more perfectly we keep these two commandments the more perfect we will be. All that is in our rule and constitutions serves for nothing else than to be a means toward keeping these commandments with greater perfection. Let's forget about indiscreet zeal; it can do us a lot of harm. Let each one look to herself. Because I have said enough about this elsewhere,¹⁸ I'll not enlarge on the matter.

18. This mutual love is so important that I would never want it to be forgotten. The soul could lose its peace and even disturb the peace of others by going about looking at trifling things in people that at times are not even imperfections, but since we know little we see these things in the worst light; look how costly this kind of perfection would be. Likewise, the devil could tempt the prioress in this way; and such a thing would be more dangerous. As a result much discretion is necessary. If things are done against the rule and constitutions, the matter need not always be seen in a good light. The prioress should be cautioned, and if she doesn't amend, the superior informed. This is charity. And the same with the Sisters if there is something serious. And to fail to do these things for fear of a temptation would itself be a temptation. But it should be carefully noted—so that the devil doesn't deceive us—that we must not talk about these things to one another. The devil could thereby gain greatly and manage to get the custom of gossiping started. The matter should be discussed with the one who will benefit, as I have said. In this house, glory to God, there's not much occasion for gossip since such continual silence is kept; but it is good that we be on guard.

THE SECOND DWELLING PLACES

This Section Has Only One Chapter

Chapter 1

Discusses the importance of perseverance if one is to reach the final dwelling places; the great war the devil wages; and the importance of taking the right road from the beginning. Offers a remedy that has proved very efficacious.

NOW LET US SPEAK about the type of soul that enters the second dwelling places and what such a soul does in them. I'd like to say only a little, for I have spoken at length on this subject elsewhere.¹ And it would be impossible to avoid repeating much of it, for I don't remember a thing of what I said. If I could present the matter for you in a variety of ways I know well that you wouldn't be annoyed since we never tire of books—as many as there are—that deal with it.

2. This stage pertains to those who have already begun to practice prayer and have understood how important it is not to stay in the first dwelling places. But they still don't have the determination to remain in this second stage without turning back, for they don't avoid the occasions of sin. This failure to avoid these occasions is quite dangerous. But these persons have received a good deal of mercy in that they sometimes do strive to escape from snakes and poisonous creatures, and they understand that it is good to avoid them.

These rooms, in part, involve much more effort than do the first, even though there is not as much danger, for it now seems

that souls in them recognize the dangers, and there is great hope they will enter further into the castle. I say that these rooms involve more effort because those who are in the first dwelling places are like deaf-mutes and thus the difficulty of not speaking is more easily endured by them than it is by those who hear but cannot speak. Yet, not for this reason does one have greater desire to be deaf, for after all it is a wonderful thing to hear what is being said to us. So these persons are able to hear the Lord when He calls. Since they are getting closer to where His Majesty dwells, He is a very good neighbor. His mercy and goodness are so bountiful; whereas we are occupied in our pastimes, business affairs, pleasures, and worldly buying and selling, and still falling into sin and rising again. These beasts are so poisonous and their presence so dangerous and noisy that it would be a wonder if we kept from stumbling and falling over them. Yet this Lord desires intensely that we love Him and seek His company, so much so that from time to time He calls us to draw near Him. And His voice is so sweet the poor soul dissolves at not doing immediately what He commands. Thus, as I say, hearing His voice is a greater trial than not hearing it.

3. I don't mean that these appeals and calls are like the ones I shall speak of later on.² But they come through words spoken by other good people, or through sermons, or through what is read in good books, or through the many things that are heard and by which God calls, or through illnesses and trials, or also through a truth that He teaches during the brief moments we spend in prayer; however lukewarm these moments may be, God esteems them highly. And you, Sisters, don't underestimate this first favor, nor should you become disconsolate if you don't respond at once to the Lord. His Majesty knows well how to wait many days and years, especially when He sees perseverance and good desires. This perseverance is most necessary here. One always gains much through perseverance. But the attacks made by devils in a thousand ways afflict the soul more in these rooms than in the previous ones. In the previous ones the soul was deaf and dumb—at least it heard very little and resisted less, as one who has partly lost hope of

conquering. Here the intellect is more alive and the faculties more skilled. The blows from the artillery strike in such a way that the soul cannot fail to hear. It is in this stage that the devils represent these snakes (worldly things) and the temporal pleasures of the present as though almost eternal. They bring to mind the esteem one has in the world, one's friends and relatives, one's health (when there's thought of penitential practices, for the soul that enters this dwelling place always begins wanting to practice some penance) and a thousand other obstacles.

4. O Jesus, what an uproar the devils instigate here! And the afflictions of the poor soul: it doesn't know whether to continue or to return to the first room. Reason, for its part, shows the soul that it is mistaken in thinking that these things of the world are not worth anything when compared to what it is aiming after. Faith, however, teaches it about where it will find fulfillment. The memory shows it where all these things end, holding before it the death of those who found great joy in them. Through the memory it sees how some have suffered sudden death, how quickly they are forgotten by all. Some whom it had known in great prosperity are under the ground, and their graves are walked upon. This soul itself has often passed by these graves. It reflects that many worms are swarming over the corpses, and thinks about numerous other things. The will is inclined to love after seeing such countless signs of love; it would want to repay something; it especially keeps in mind how this true Lover never leaves it, accompanying it and giving it life and being. Then the intellect helps it realize that it couldn't find a better friend, even were it to live for many years, that the whole world is filled with falsehood, and that so too these joys the devil gives it are filled with trials, cares, and contradictions. The intellect tells the soul of its certainty that outside this castle neither security nor peace will be found, that it should avoid going about to strange houses since its own is so filled with blessings to be enjoyed if it wants. The intellect will ask who it is that finds everything he needs in his own house and, especially, has a guest who will make him lord over all goods provided that he wills to avoid going astray like

the prodigal son and eating the husks of swine.³

5. These are reasons for conquering the devils. But, oh, my Lord and my God, how the whole world's habit of getting involved in vanities vitiates everything! Our faith is so dead that we desire what we see more than what faith tells us. And, indeed, we see only a lot of misfortune in those who go after these visible vanities. But these poisonous things we are dealing with are the cause of this misfortune, for just as all is poisoned if a viper bites someone and the wound swells, so we will be poisoned if we do not watch ourselves. Clearly many remedies are necessary to cure us, and God is favoring us a good deal if we do not die from the wound. Certainly the soul undergoes great trials here. If the devil, especially, realizes that it has all it needs in its temperament and habits to advance far, he will gather all hell together to make the soul go back outside.

6. Ah, my Lord! Your help is necessary here; without it one can do nothing.⁴ In Your mercy do not consent to allow this soul to suffer deception and give up what was begun. Enlighten it that it may see how all its good is within this castle and that it may turn away from bad companions. It's a wonderful thing for a person to talk to those who speak about this interior castle, to draw near not only to those seen to be in these rooms where he is but to those known to have entered the ones closer to the center. Conversation with these latter will be a great help to him, and he can converse so much with them that they will bring him to where they are. Let the soul always heed the warning not to be conquered. If the devil sees that it has the strong determination to lose its life and repose and all that he offers it rather than return to the first room, he will abandon it much more quickly. Let the soul be manly and not like those soldiers who knelt down to drink before going into battle (I don't remember with whom),⁵ but be determined to fight with all the devils and realize that there are no better weapons than those of the cross.

7. Even though I've said this at other times,⁶ it's so important that I repeat it here: it is that souls shouldn't be thinking about consolations at this beginning stage. It would be a very poor way to start building so precious and great an edifice. If

the foundation is on sand, the whole building will fall to the ground. They'll never finish being dissatisfied and tempted. These are not the dwelling places where it rains manna; those lie further ahead, where a soul finds in the manna every taste it desires;⁷ for it wants only what God wants. It's an amusing thing that even though we still have a thousand impediments and imperfections and our virtues have hardly begun to grow—and please God they may have begun—we are yet not ashamed to seek spiritual delights in prayer or to complain about dryness. May this never happen to you, Sisters. Embrace the cross your Spouse has carried and understand that this must be your task. Let the one who can do so, suffer more for Him; and she will be rewarded that much more. As for other favors, if the Lord should grant you one, thank Him for it as you would for something freely added on.

8. It will seem to you that you are truly determined to undergo exterior trials, provided that God favors you interiorly. His Majesty knows best what is suitable for us. There's no need for us to be advising Him about what He should give us, for He can rightly tell us that we don't know what we're asking for.⁸ The whole aim of any person who is beginning prayer—and don't forget this, because it's very important—should be that he work and prepare himself with determination and every possible effort to bring his will into conformity with God's will. Be certain that, as I shall say later,⁹ the greatest perfection attainable along the spiritual path lies in this conformity. It is the person who lives in more perfect conformity who will receive more from the Lord and be more advanced on this road. Don't think that in what concerns perfection there is some mystery or things unknown or still to be understood, for in perfect conformity to God's will lies all our good. Now then, if we err in the beginning, desiring that the Lord do our will at once and lead us according to what we imagine, what kind of stability will this edifice have? Let us strive to do what lies in our power and guard ourselves against these poisonous little reptiles, for the Lord often desires that dryness and bad thoughts afflict and pursue us without our being able to get rid of them. Sometimes He even permits these

reptiles to bite us so that afterward we may know how to guard ourselves better and that He may prove whether we are greatly grieved by having offended Him.

9. Thus, if you should at times fall don't become discouraged and stop striving to advance. For even from this fall God will draw out good, as does the seller of an antidote who drinks some poison in order to test whether his antidote is effective. Even if we didn't see our misery—or the great harm that a dissipated life does to us—through any other means than through this assault that we endure for the sake of being brought back to recollection, that would be enough. Can there be an evil greater than that of being ill at ease in our own house? What hope can we have of finding rest outside of ourselves if we cannot be at rest within. We have so many great and true friends and relatives (which are our faculties) with whom we must always live, even though we may not want to. But from what we feel, these seem to be warring against us because of what our vices have done to them. Peace, peace, the Lord said, my Sisters; and He urged His apostle so many times.¹⁰ Well, believe me, if we don't obtain and have peace in our own house we'll not find it outside. Let this war be ended. Through the blood He shed for us I ask those who have not begun to enter within themselves to do so; and those who have begun, not to let the war make them turn back. Let these latter reflect that a relapse is worse than a fall; they already see their loss. Let them trust in the mercy of God and not at all in themselves, and they will see how His Majesty brings them from the dwelling places of one stage to those of another and settles them in a land where these wild animals cannot touch or tire them, but where they themselves will bring all these animals into subjection and scoff at them. And they shall enjoy many more blessings than one can desire—blessings even in this life, I mean.

10. Since, as I've said in the beginning,¹¹ I've written to you about how you should conduct yourselves in these disturbances set up here by the devil and how you cannot begin to recollect yourselves by force but only by gentleness, if your recollection is going to be more continual, I will not say anything else here

than that in my opinion it is very important to consult persons with experience; for you will be thinking that you are seriously failing to do some necessary thing. Provided that we don't give up, the Lord will guide everything for our benefit, even though we may not find someone to teach us. There is no other remedy for this evil of giving up prayer than to begin again; otherwise the soul will gradually lose more each day—and please God that it will understand this fact.

11. Someone could think that if turning back is so bad it would be better never to begin but to remain outside the castle. I have already told you at the beginning—and the Lord Himself tells you—that anyone who walks in danger perishes in it¹² and that the door of entry to this castle is prayer. Well now, it is foolish to think that we will enter heaven without entering into ourselves, coming to know ourselves, reflecting on our misery and what we owe God, and begging Him often for mercy. The Lord Himself says: *No one will ascend to My Father but through Me*¹³ (I don't know if He says it this way—I think He does) and *whoever sees Me sees My Father*.¹⁴ Well, if we never look at Him or reflect on what we owe Him and the death He suffered for us, I don't know how we'll be able to know Him or do works in His service. And what value can faith have without works and without joining them to the merits of Jesus Christ, our Good? Or who will awaken us to love this Lord?

May it please His Majesty to give us understanding of how much we cost Him, of how the servant is no greater than his master,¹⁵ and that we must work in order to enjoy His glory. And we need to pray for this understanding so that we aren't always entering into temptation.¹⁶

THE THIRD DWELLING PLACES

Contains Two Chapters

Chapter 1

Treats of what little security we can have while living in this exile, even though we may have reached a high state, and of how we should walk with fear. This chapter has some good points.

WHAT SHALL WE SAY to those who through perseverance and the mercy of God have won these battles and have entered the rooms of the third stage, if not: *Blessed is the man who fears the Lord?*¹ His Majesty has done no small thing in giving me understanding right now of what this verse means in the vernacular, for I am ignorant in matters like this. Certainly we are right in calling such a man blessed, since if he doesn't turn back he is, from what we can understand, on the secure path to his salvation.² Here you will see, Sisters, how important it was to win the previous battles. I am certain the Lord never fails to give a person like this security of conscience, which is no small blessing. I said "security" and I was wrong, for there is no security in this life; so always understand that I mean "if he doesn't abandon the path he began on."

2. It is a great misery to have to live a life in which we must always walk like those whose enemies are at their doorstep; they can neither sleep nor eat without weapons and without being always frightened lest somewhere these enemies might be able to break through this fortress. O my Lord and my Good, how is it that You want us to desire so miserable a life, for it isn't

possible to stop wanting and asking You to take us out of it unless there is hope of losing it for You or of spending it very earnestly in Your service or, above all, of understanding what Your will is? If it is Your will, my God, may we die with You, as St. Thomas said;³ for living without You and with these fears of the possibility of losing You forever is nothing else than dying often. That's why, daughters, I say that the blessedness we must ask for is that of being already secure with the blessed. For with these fears, what happiness can anyone have whose whole happiness is to please God? Consider that this happiness was had — and in much greater degree — by some saints who fell into serious sins and that we are not sure that God will help us to get free from these sins and to do penance for them.

3. Certainly, my daughters, I am so fearful as I write this that I don't know how I'm writing it or how I live when I think about it, which is very often. Pray, my daughters, that His Majesty may live in me always. If He doesn't, what security can a life as badly spent as mine have? And do not become sad in knowing that this life has been badly spent, as I have sometimes observed you become when I tell this to you; you continue to desire that I might have lived a very holy life — and you are right. I too would want to have so lived, but what can I do if I have lost holiness through my own fault! I will not complain about God who gave me enough help to carry out your desires. I cannot say this without tears and being very ashamed that I am writing something for those who can teach me. Doing so has been a hard command to obey! May it please the Lord that since it is being done for Him it may be of some benefit to you so that You may ask Him to pardon this miserable and bold creature. But His Majesty well knows that I can boast only of His mercy, and since I cannot cease being what I have been, I have no other remedy than to approach His mercy and to trust in the merits of His Son and of the Virgin, His Mother, whose habit I wear so unworthily, and you wear. Praise Him, my daughters, for you truly belong to our Lady. Thus you have no reason to be ashamed of my misery since you have such a good Mother. Imitate her and reflect that the grandeur of our Lady and the good of having her for your patroness must be in-

deed great since my sins and being what I am have not been enough to tarnish in any way this sacred order.

4. But one thing I advise you: not because you have such a Mother or Patroness should you feel secure, for David was very holy, and you already know who Solomon was. Don't pay any attention to the enclosure and the penance in which you live or feel safe in the fact that you are always conversing with God and practicing such continual prayer and being so withdrawn from the world of things and, in your opinion, holding them in abhorrence. These practices are all good, but not a sufficient reason, as I have said,⁴ for us to stop fearing. So, continue to say this verse and often bear it in mind: *Beatus vir qui timet Dominum*.⁵

5. I don't remember what I was speaking about, for I have digressed a great deal and in thinking of myself I feel helpless, as a bird with broken wings, when it comes to saying anything good. So I want to leave this matter aside for now. Let me get back to what I began telling you⁶ concerning souls that have entered the third dwelling places, for the Lord has done them no small favor, but a very great one, in letting them get through the first difficulties. I believe that through the goodness of God there are many of these souls in the world. They long not to offend His Majesty, even guarding themselves against venial sins; they are fond of doing penance and setting aside periods for recollection; they spend their time well, practicing works of charity toward their neighbors; and are very balanced in their use of speech and dress and in the governing of their households—those who have them. Certainly, this is a state to be desired. And, in my opinion, there is no reason why entrance even into the final dwelling place should be denied these souls, nor will the Lord deny them this entrance if they desire it; for such a desire is an excellent way to prepare oneself so that every favor may be granted.

6. O Jesus, and who will say that he doesn't want a good so wonderful, especially after having passed through the most difficult trial? No, nobody will. We all say that we want this good. But since there is need of still more in order that the soul possess the Lord completely, it is not enough to say we want it;

just as this was not enough for the young man whom the Lord told what one must do in order to be perfect.⁷ From the time I began to speak of these dwelling places I have had this young man in mind. For we are literally like him; and ordinarily the great dryness in prayer comes from this, although it also has other causes. And I'm leaving aside mention of some interior trials that many good souls undergo (unbearable trials and not at all due to their own fault), from which the Lord always frees them to their own great benefit, and mention of those who suffer from melancholy and other illnesses. Briefly, in all things we have to let God be the judge. What I've said, I believe, is what usually happens; for since these souls realize that they wouldn't commit a sin for anything—many wouldn't even advertently commit a venial sin—and that they conduct their lives and households well, they cannot accept patiently that the door of entry to the place where our King dwells be closed to them who consider themselves His vassals. But even though a king here on earth has many vassals, not all enter his chamber. Enter, enter, my daughters, into the interior rooms; pass on from your little works. By the mere fact that you are Christians you must do all these things and much more. It is enough for you to be God's vassals; don't let your desire be for so much that as a result you will be left with nothing. Behold the saints who entered this King's chamber, and you will see the difference between them and us. Don't ask for what you have not deserved, nor should it enter our minds that we have merited this favor however much we may have served—we who have offended God.

7. Oh, humility, humility! I don't know what kind of temptation I'm undergoing in this matter that I cannot help but think that anyone who makes such an issue of this dryness is a little lacking in humility. I said that I've omitted mention of those great interior trials I've referred to,⁸ for those involve much more than just a lack of devotion. Let us prove ourselves, my Sisters, or let the Lord prove us, for He knows well how to do this even though we often don't want to understand it. Let us speak now of those souls whose lives are so well ordered; let us recognize what they do for God, and we shall at once see

how we have no reason for complaining of His Majesty. If, like the young man in the Gospel, we turn our backs and go away sad⁹ when the Lord tells us what we must do to be perfect, what do you want His Majesty to do? For He must give the reward in conformity with the love we have for Him. And this love, daughters, must not be fabricated in our imaginations but proved by deeds. And don't think He needs our works; He needs the determination of our wills.

8. We seem to think that everything is done when we willingly take and wear the religious habit and abandon all worldly things and possessions for Him—even though these possessions may amount to no more than the nets St. Peter possessed,¹⁰ for he who gives what he has thinks he gives enough. This renunciation is a good enough preparation if one perseveres in it and doesn't turn back and become involved with the vermin in the first rooms, even if it be only in desire. There is no doubt that if a person perseveres in this nakedness and detachment from all worldly things he will reach his goal. But this perseverance includes the condition—and note that I am advising you of this—that you consider yourselves useless servants, as St. Paul, or Christ, says;¹¹ and believe that you have not put our Lord under any obligation to grant you these kinds of favors. Rather, as one who has received more, you are more indebted.¹² What can we do for a God so generous that He died for us, created us, and gives us being? Shouldn't we consider ourselves lucky to be able to repay something of what we owe Him for His service toward us? I say these words “His service toward us” unwillingly; but the fact is that He did nothing else but serve us all the time He lived in this world. And yet we ask Him again for favors and gifts.

9. Reflect a great deal, daughters, on some of the things that are here pointed out, even though in a jumbled way, for I don't know how to explain them further. The Lord will give you understanding of them so that out of dryness you may draw humility—and not disquiet, which is what the devil aims after. Be convinced that where humility is truly present God will give a peace and conformity—even though He may never give consolations—by which one will walk with greater con-

tentment than will others with their consolations. For often, as you have read,¹³ the divine Majesty gives these consolations to the weaker souls; although I think we would not exchange these consolations for the fortitude of those who walk in dryness. We are fonder of consolations than we are of the cross. Test us, Lord—for You know the truth—so that we may know ourselves.

Chapter 2

Continues on the same topic; deals with dryness in prayer; with what, in her opinion, might take place at this stage; how it is necessary to test ourselves; and with the fact that the Lord does try those who are in these dwelling places.

I HAVE KNOWN SOME SOULS and even many—I believe I can say—who have reached this state and have lived many years in this upright and well-ordered way both in body and soul, insofar as can be known. After these years, when it seems they have become lords of the world, at least clearly disillusioned in its regard, His Majesty will try them in some minor matters, and they will go about so disturbed and afflicted that it puzzles me and even makes me fearful. It's useless to give them advice, for since they have engaged so long in the practice of virtue they think they can teach others and that they are more than justified in feeling disturbed.

2. In sum, I have found neither a way of consoling nor a cure for such persons other than to show them compassion in their affliction—and, indeed, compassion is felt on seeing them subject to so much misery—and not contradict their reasoning. For everything in their minds leads them to think they are suffering these things for God, and so, they don't come to realize that their disturbance is an imperfection. This is another mistake of persons so advanced. There is no reason for us to be surprised at what they experience; although I do think the feeling stirred by such things should pass quickly. For God

often desires that His chosen ones feel their wretchedness, and He withdraws His favor a little. No more is necessary, for I would wager that we'd then soon get to know ourselves. The nature of this trial is immediately understood, for they recognize their fault very clearly. Sometimes, seeing their fault distresses them more than the thing that disturbs them, for unable to help themselves they are affected by earthly happenings even though these may not be very burdensome. This distress, I think, is a great mercy from God; and although it is a defect, it is very beneficial for humility.

3. As for the persons I am speaking about, this is not so. But, as I have said, they canonize these feelings in their minds and would like others to do so. I want to mention some of these feelings so that we may understand and test ourselves before the Lord tests us. It is very important to be prepared and to have understood ourselves beforehand.

4. A rich person without children or anyone to whom he might want to leave his possessions happens to lose his wealth, but not to such an extent that he lacks necessities for himself and for the management of his household; he even has a surplus. If he should go about as worried and disturbed as he would be if not even a piece of bread were left, how can our Lord ask him to leave all for Him?¹ Here the person makes the excuse that he feels the way he does because he wants these things for the poor. But I believe that God has a greater desire that such a person conform to the divine will and that, though this person may try to procure such wealth, he keep his soul at rest rather than worry about charity of such a kind. And if the person doesn't do this, because the Lord has not brought him so far, well and good; but he should understand that he lacks this freedom of spirit. And because the Lord will ask him for it, he should prepare himself so that the Lord may give it to him; he will be asking His Majesty for it.

A person has plenty to eat and even a surplus; the opportunity presents itself for him to acquire more wealth; all right, let him do so if it is offered to him. But if he strives for wealth and after possessing it strives for more and more, however good the intention may be (for he should have a good intention because, as

I have said,² these are virtuous persons of prayer), he need have no fear of ascending to the dwelling places closest to the King.

5. There is a similar occurrence when an opportunity presents itself for these persons to be despised or to lose a little honor. God often grants them the favor of enduring such a thing; for He is very fond of favoring virtue publicly so that virtue itself will not undergo a loss of esteem. Or He will also do so because they have served Him, for this Beloved of ours is very good. But now they are left in such disquiet they cannot help themselves, nor can they quickly get rid of this disturbance. God help me! Aren't these the ones who for a long while now have considered how the Lord suffered and how good suffering is, and who have desired it? They would like everyone to live a life as well ordered as they do; and please God they will not think their grief is for the faults of others and in their minds turn it into something meritorious.

6. It must seem to you, Sisters, that I'm not staying on the subject or not speaking to you, for these things don't take place here. Neither do we have wealth nor do we desire or strive for it, nor does anyone do injury to us. As a result the examples are not relevant to us. But from these examples many lessons can be learned about things which it would not be good to single out, nor would there be reason to do so. Through the above examples you will understand whether or not you are truly stripped of what you have left behind. For little things happen even though not of this kind, in which you can very well test and know whether or not you are the rulers of your passions. And believe me the whole affair doesn't lie in whether or not we wear the religious habit but in striving to practice the virtues, in surrendering our will to God in everything, in bringing our life into accord with what His Majesty ordains for it, and in desiring that His will not ours be done.³ Since we may not have reached this stage—humility, as I have said!⁴ Humility is the ointment for our wounds because if we indeed have humility, even though there may be a time of delay, the surgeon, who is our Lord, will come to heal us.

7. The penance these souls do is well balanced, like their lives. They desire penance a great deal so as to serve our Lord

by it. Nothing of this is wrong, and thus they are very discreet in doing it in a way so as not to harm their health. Have no fear that they will kill themselves, for their reason is still very much in control. Love has not yet reached the point of overwhelming reason. But I should like us to use our reason to make ourselves dissatisfied with this way of serving God, always going step by step, for we'll never finish this journey. And since, in our opinion, we are continually walking and are tired (for, believe me, it is a wearisome journey), we will be doing quite well if we don't go astray. But does it seem to you, daughters, that if we could go from one land to another in eight days, it would be good to take a year through wind, snow, rain, and bad roads? Wouldn't it be better to make the journey all at once? For all these obstacles are present, as well as danger from snakes. Oh what good proofs I could give of these things. And please God I may have passed beyond this stage, for often enough it seems to me I haven't.

8. Since we are so circumspect, everything offends us because we fear everything; so we don't dare go further—as if we could reach these dwelling places while leaving to other persons the trouble of treading the path for us. Since this is not possible, let us exert ourselves, my Sisters, for the love of the Lord; let's abandon our reason and our fears into His hands; let's forget this natural weakness that can take up our attention so much. Let the prelates take care of our bodily needs; that's their business. As for ourselves, we should care only about moving quickly so as to see this Lord. Even though the comfort you have is little or none at all, we could be deceived by worry about our health. Furthermore, worry over our health will not improve our health. This I know. And I also know that the whole affair doesn't lie in what pertains to the body, for this is what is the least important. The journey I am speaking of must be taken with great humility. For if you have understood, it is in regard to humility, I believe, that there is an obstacle for those who do not go forward. It should seem to us that we have gone but a few steps, and we should believe this to be so, and that those our Sisters have taken are rapid ones; and not only should we desire but we should strive that they consider us the most miserable of all.

9. With humility present, this stage is a most excellent one. If humility is lacking, we will remain here our whole life—and with a thousand afflictions and miseries. For since we will not have abandoned ourselves, this state will be very laborious and burdensome. We shall be walking while weighed down with this mud of our human misery, which is not so with those who ascend to the remaining rooms. But in these rooms of which we're speaking, the Lord, as one who is just or even merciful, does not fail to pay; for He always gives much more than we deserve by giving us consolations far greater than those we find in the comforts and distractions of life. But I don't think He gives much spiritual delight unless sometimes in order to invite souls by the sight of what takes place in the remaining dwelling places and so that they will prepare themselves to enter them.

10. It will seem to you that consolations and spiritual delights are the same, so why should I make this distinction? To me it seems there is a very great difference between the two. Now I can be wrong. I'll say what I understand about this when I speak of the fourth dwelling places which come after these. For since something will have to be explained about the spiritual delights the Lord gives there, the discussion will be more appropriate at that time. And although the explanation may seem to be useless it might help somewhat so that in understanding the nature of each thing you will be able to strive for what is best. Great solace comes to souls God brings there, and confusion to those who think they have everything. If souls are humble they will be moved to give thanks. If there is some lack in humility, they will feel an inner distaste for which they will find no reason. For perfection as well as its reward does not consist in spiritual delights but in greater love and in deeds done with greater justice and truth.

11. You will wonder, if this is true—as it is—what use it serves to explain and treat of these interior favors. I don't know. Ask him who ordered me to write, for I am not obliged to dispute with superiors but to obey—nor would disputing with them be right. What I can truthfully say to you is that at one time I didn't have or even know about these favors through experience or think that I would ever in my life know about

them in this way—and rightly so, for it was happiness enough for me to know, or by conjecture understand, that I was pleasing God in something. But when I read in books about these delights and favors the Lord grants souls that serve Him, I was very much consoled and moved to give great praise to God. Well, if my soul which was so wretched did this, those souls that are good and humble will praise Him much more. And if one alone is led to praise Him even once, it is in my opinion very good that the subject be mentioned so that we know about the happiness and delight we lose through our own fault. Moreover, if these favors are from God they come brimming over with love and fortitude by which you can journey with less labor and grow in the practice of works and virtues. Don't think that it matters little to lose such favors through our own fault; when it isn't our fault, the Lord is just.⁵ His Majesty will give you through other paths what He keeps from you on this one because of what He knows, for His secrets are very hidden; at least what He does will without any doubt be what is most suitable for us.

12. What it seems to me would be highly beneficial for those who through the goodness of the Lord are in this state (for, as I have said,⁶ He grants them no small mercy because they are very close to ascending higher) is that they study diligently how to be prompt in obedience. And even if they are not members of a religious order, it would be a great thing for them to have—as do many persons—someone whom they could consult so as not to do their own will in anything. Doing our own will is usually what harms us. And they shouldn't seek another of their own making, as they say—one who is so circumspect about everything; but seek out someone who is very free from illusion about the things of the world. For in order to know ourselves, it helps a great deal to speak with someone who already knows the world for what it is. And it helps also because when we see some things done by others that seem so impossible for us and the ease with which they are done, we become very encouraged. And it seems that through the flight of these others we also will make bold to fly, as do the bird's fledglings when they are taught; for even though they do not begin to soar immediately, little by little they imitate the

parent. Receiving this help is most beneficial; I know. However determined they are to keep from offending the Lord, these persons will be right not to place themselves in the occasion of offending Him. Since they are close to the first dwelling places, they could easily return to them. Their fortitude is not founded on solid ground, as is the case with those who are tried in suffering, for these latter know about the storms of the world and what little reason there is to fear them or desire the world's consolations. But it would be possible for the former in a great persecution to return to these consolations. The devil knows well how to stir up tempests so as to do us harm, and these persons would be unable to bear the trials that would come from their zeal to prevent others from committing sin.

13. Let us look at our own faults and leave aside those of others, for it is very characteristic of persons with such well-ordered lives to be shocked by everything. Perhaps we could truly learn from the one who shocks us what is most important even though we may surpass him in external composure and our way of dealing with others. Although good, these latter things are not what is most important; nor is there any reason to desire that everyone follow at once our own path, or to set about teaching the way of the spirit to someone who perhaps doesn't know what such a thing is. For with these desires that God gives us, Sisters, about the good of souls, we can make many mistakes. So it is better to carry out what our rule says, to strive to live always in silence and hope,⁷ for the Lord will take care of these souls. If we ourselves are not negligent in beseeching His Majesty to do so, we shall, with His favor, do much good. May He be blessed forever.

THE FOURTH DWELLING PLACES

Contains Three Chapters

Chapter 1

Discusses the difference between consolations (or feelings of tenderness) in prayer and spiritual delights.¹ Tells of her happiness on learning the difference between the mind and the intellect. This knowledge is very beneficial for anyone who is greatly distracted in prayer.

IN ORDER TO BEGIN to speak of the fourth dwelling places I really need to entrust myself, as I've already done, to the Holy Spirit and beg Him to speak for me from here on that I may say something about the remaining rooms in a way that you will understand. For supernatural experiences begin here. These are something most difficult to explain, if His Majesty doesn't do so, as was said in another book I wrote fourteen years ago, more or less, in which I dealt with these experiences to the extent of my knowledge of them at that time. Although I think I now have a little more light about these favors the Lord grants to some souls, knowing how to explain them is a different matter.² May His Majesty help me to do so if it will be of some benefit; and if not, then no.

2. Since these dwelling places now are closer to where the King is, their beauty is great. There are things to see and understand so delicate that the intellect is incapable of finding words to explain them, although something might turn out to be well put and not at all obscure to the unexperienced; and anyone who has experience, especially when there is a lot of it, will understand very well.

It will seem that to reach these dwelling places one will have had to live in the others a long while. Although it is usual that a person will have to have stayed in those already spoken about, there is no certain rule, as you will have often heard. For the Lord gives when He desires, as He desires, and to whom He desires. Since these blessings belong to Him, He does no injustice to anyone.³

3. Poisonous creatures rarely enter these dwelling places. If they enter they do no harm; rather, they are the occasion of gain. I hold that the situation is much better in this stage of prayer when these creatures do enter and wage war, for the devil could deceive one with respect to the spiritual delights given by God if there were no temptations, and do much more harm than when temptations are felt. The soul would not gain so much; at least all the things contributing to its merit would be removed, and it would be left in a habitual absorption. For when a soul is in one continual state, I don't consider it safe, nor do I think it is possible for the spirit of the Lord to be in one fixed state during this exile.

4. Well now, in speaking about what I said I'd mention here⁴ concerning the difference in prayer between consolations and spiritual delights, the term "consolations," I think, can be given to those experiences we ourselves acquire through our own meditation and petitions to the Lord, those that proceed from our own nature—although God in the end does have a hand in them; for it must be understood, in whatever I say, that without Him we can do nothing.⁵ But the consolations arise from the virtuous work itself that we perform, and it seems that we have earned them through our own effort and are rightly consoled for having engaged in such deeds. But if we reflect upon this, we see that we experience the same joyful consolations in many of the things that can happen to us on earth; for example: when someone suddenly inherits a great fortune; when we suddenly see a person we love very much; when we succeed in a large and important business matter and of which everyone speaks well; when you see your husband or brother or son alive after someone has told you he is dead. I have seen the flow of tears from great consolations, and this has even

happened to me at times. I think that just as these joyful consolations are natural so are those afforded us by the things of God, but these latter are of a nobler kind, although the others are not bad. In sum, joyful consolations in prayer have their beginning in our own human nature and end in God.

The spiritual delights begin in God, but human nature feels and enjoys them as much as it does those I mentioned—and much more. O Jesus, how I long to know how to explain this! For I discern, I think, a very recognizable difference, but I don't have the knowledge to be able to explain myself. May the Lord do so.

5. Now I remember a line that we say at Prime, in the latter part of the verse at the end of the last psalm: *Cum dilatasti cor meum*.⁶ For anyone who has had much experience these words are sufficient to see the difference between consolations and spiritual delights; for anyone who has not, more words are needed. The consolations that were mentioned do not expand the heart; rather, they usually seem to constrain it a little—although there is the greatest consolation at seeing what is done for God. But some anxious tears come that in a way, it seems, are brought on by the passions. I don't know much about these passions of the soul—knowledge of them might perhaps have enabled me to explain—and what proceeds from sensuality and from our human nature, for I am very dull. If only I knew how to explain myself, for since I have undergone this I understand it. Knowledge and learning are a great help in everything.

6. My experience of this state (I mean of this joy and consolation that comes during meditation) is that if I began to weep over the Passion I didn't know how to stop until I got a severe headache; if I did so over my sins, the same thing happened. Our Lord granted me quite a favor. Yet I don't want to examine now whether the one or the other is better, but I would like to know how to explain the difference there is between the one and the other. It is for these reasons sometimes that these tears flow and desires come, and they are furthered by human nature and one's temperament; but finally, as I have said,⁷ they end in God regardless of their nature. They

are to be esteemed if there is the humility to understand that one is no better because of experiencing them, for it cannot be known whether they are all effects of love. When they are, the gift is God's.

For the most part, the souls in the previous dwelling places are the ones who have these devout feelings, for these souls work almost continually with the intellect, engaging in discursive thought and meditation. And they do well because nothing further has been given them; although they would be right if they engaged for a while in making acts of love, praising God, rejoicing in His goodness, that He is who He is, and in desiring His honor and glory. These acts should be made insofar as possible, for they are great awakeners of the will. Such souls would be well advised when the Lord gives them these acts not to abandon them for the sake of finishing the usual meditation.

7. Because I have spoken at length on this subject elsewhere,⁸ I will say nothing about it here. I only wish to inform you that in order to profit by this path and ascend to the dwelling places we desire, the important thing is not to think much but to love much;⁹ and so do that which best stirs you to love. Perhaps we don't know what love is. I wouldn't be very surprised, because it doesn't consist in great delight but in desiring with strong determination to please God in everything, in striving, insofar as possible, not to offend Him, and in asking Him for the advancement of the honor and glory of His Son and the increase of the Catholic Church. These are the signs of love. Don't think the matter lies in thinking of nothing else, and that if you become a little distracted all is lost.

8. I have been very afflicted at times in the midst of this turmoil of mind. A little more than four years ago I came to understand through experience that the mind (or imagination, to put it more clearly) is not the intellect. I asked a learned man and he told me that this was so; which brought me no small consolation.¹⁰ For since the intellect is one of the soul's faculties, it was an arduous thing for me that it should be so restless at times. Ordinarily the mind flies about quickly, for only God can hold it fast in such a way as to make it seem that we are somehow loosed from this body. I have seen, I think,

that the faculties of my soul were occupied and recollected in God while my mind on the other hand was distracted. This distraction puzzled me.¹¹

9. O Lord, take into account the many things we suffer on this path for lack of knowledge! The trouble is that since we do not think there is anything to know other than that we must think of You, we do not even know how to ask those who know nor do we understand what there is to ask. Terrible trials are suffered because we don't understand ourselves, and that which isn't bad at all but good we think is a serious fault. This lack of knowledge causes the afflictions of many people who engage in prayer; complaints about interior trials, at least to a great extent, by people who have no learning; melancholy and loss of health; and even the complete abandonment of prayer. For such persons don't reflect that there is an interior world here within us. Just as we cannot stop the movement of the heavens, but they proceed in rapid motion, so neither can we stop our mind; and then the faculties of the soul go with it, and we think we are lost and have wasted the time spent before God. But the soul is perhaps completely joined with Him in the dwelling places very close to the center while the mind is on the outskirts of the castle suffering from a thousand wild and poisonous beasts, and meriting by this suffering. As a result we should not be disturbed; nor should we abandon prayer, which is what the devil wants us to do. For the most part all the trials and disturbances come from our not understanding ourselves.

10. While writing this, I'm thinking about what's going on in my head with the great noise there that I mentioned in the beginning.¹² It makes it almost impossible for me to write what I was ordered to. It seems as if there are in my head many rushing rivers and that these waters are hurtling downward, and many little birds and whistling sounds, not in the ears but in the upper part of the head where, they say, the higher part of the soul is. And I was in that superior part for a long time, for it seems this powerful movement of the spirit is a swift upward one. Please God I'll remember to mention the cause of this in discussing the dwelling places that come further on, for this is not a fitting place to do so, and I wouldn't be surprised if

the Lord gave me this headache so that I could understand these things better. For all this turmoil in my head doesn't hinder prayer or what I am saying, but the soul is completely taken up in its quiet, love, desires, and clear knowledge.

11. Now then if the superior part of the soul is in the superior part of the head, why isn't the soul disturbed? This I don't know. But I do know that what I say is true. The pain is felt when suspension does not accompany the prayer. When suspension does accompany prayer, no pain is felt until the suspension passes. But it would be very bad if I were to abandon everything on account of this obstacle. And so it isn't good for us to be disturbed by our thoughts, nor should we be concerned. If the devil causes them, they will cease with this suspension. If they come, as they do, from one of the many miseries inherited through the sin of Adam, let us be patient and endure them for the love of God since we are likewise subject to eating and sleeping without being able to avoid it, which is quite a trial.

12. Let us recognize our misery and desire to go where no one will taunt us, for sometimes I recall having heard these words the bride says in the *Song of Songs*.¹³ And indeed I don't find in all of life anything about which they can be more rightly said. It seems to me that all the contempt and trials one can endure in life cannot be compared to these interior battles. Any disquiet and war can be suffered if we find peace where we live, as I have already said.¹⁴ But that we desire to rest from the thousand trials there are in the world and that the Lord wants to prepare us for tranquillity and that within ourselves lies the obstacle to such rest and tranquillity cannot fail to be very painful and almost unbearable. So, Lord, bring us to the place where these miseries will not taunt us, for they seem sometimes to be making fun of the soul. Even in this life, the Lord frees the soul from these miseries when it reaches the last dwelling place, as we shall say if God wills.¹⁵

13. These miseries will not afflict or assail everyone as much as they did me for many years because of my wretchedness. It seems that I myself wanted to take vengeance on myself. And since the experience was something so painful for me, I think

perhaps that it will be so for you too. And I so often speak of it here and there that I might sometime succeed in explaining to you that it is an unavoidable thing and should not be a disturbance or affliction for you but that we must let the millclapper go clacking on, and must continue grinding our flour and not fail to work with the will and the intellect.

14. There is a more and a less to this obstacle in accordance with one's health and age. Let the poor soul suffer even though it has no fault in this; we have other faults, which makes it right for us to practice patience. And since our reading and the counsels we receive (that is, to pay no attention to these thoughts) don't suffice, I don't think that the time spent in explaining these things for those of you with little knowledge and consoling you in this matter is time lost. But until the Lord wants to enlighten us, these counsels will be of little help. Yet, it is necessary and His Majesty wishes us to take the means and understand ourselves; and let's not blame the soul for what a weak imagination, human nature, and the devil cause.

Chapter 2

Continues on the same subject and explains through a comparison the nature of spiritual delight and how this is attained by not seeking it.

GOD HELP ME with what I have undertaken! I've already forgot what I was dealing with, for business matters and poor health have forced me to set this work aside just when I was at my best; and since I have a poor memory everything will come out confused because I can't go back to read it over. And perhaps even everything else I say is confused; at least that's what I feel it is.

It seems to me I have explained the nature of consolations in the spiritual life.¹ Since they are sometimes mixed with our own passions, they are the occasion of loud sobbing; and I have heard some persons say they experience a tightening in the

chest and even external bodily movements that they cannot restrain. The force of these passions can cause nosebleeds and other things just as painful. I don't know how to explain anything about these experiences because I haven't had any. But they must nonetheless be consoling, for, as I'm saying,² the whole experience ends in the desire to please God and enjoy His Majesty's company.

2. The experiences that I call spiritual delight in God, that I termed elsewhere the prayer of quiet,³ are of a very different kind, as those of you who by the mercy of God have experienced them will know. Let's consider, for a better understanding, that we see two founts with two water troughs. (For I don't find anything more appropriate to explain some spiritual experiences than water; and this is because I know little and have no helpful cleverness of mind and am so fond of this element that I have observed it more attentively than other things. In all the things that so great and wise a God has created there must be many beneficial secrets, and those who understand them do benefit, although I believe that in each little thing created by God there is more than what is understood, even if it is a little ant.)

3. These two troughs are filled with water in different ways; with one the water comes from far away through many aqueducts and the use of much ingenuity; with the other the source of the water is right there, and the trough fills without any noise. If the spring is abundant, as is this one we are speaking about, the water overflows once the trough is filled, forming a large stream. There is no need of any skill, nor does the building of aqueducts have to continue; but water is always flowing from the spring.

The water coming from the aqueducts is comparable, in my opinion, to the consolations I mentioned⁴ that are drawn from meditation. For we obtain them through thoughts, assisting ourselves, using creatures to help our meditation, and tiring the intellect. Since, in the end, the consolation comes through our own efforts, noise is made when there has to be some replenishing of the benefits the consolation causes in the soul, as has been said.⁵

4. With this other fount, the water comes from its own source which is God. And since His Majesty desires to do so—when He is pleased to grant some supernatural favor—He produces this delight with the greatest peace and quiet and sweetness in the very interior part of ourselves. I don't know from where or how, nor is that happiness and delight experienced, as are earthly consolations, in the heart. I mean there is no similarity at the beginning, for afterward the delight fills everything; this water overflows through all the dwelling places and faculties until reaching the body. That is why I said⁶ that it begins in God and ends in ourselves. For, certainly, as anyone who may have experienced it will see, the whole exterior man enjoys this spiritual delight and sweetness.

5. I was now thinking, while writing this, that the verse mentioned above, *Dilatasti cor meum*,⁷ says the heart was expanded. I don't think the experience is something, as I say, that rises from the heart, but from another part still more interior, as from something deep. I think this must be the center of the soul, as I later came to understand and will mention at the end.⁸ For certainly I see secrets within ourselves that have often caused me to marvel. And how many more there must be! Oh, my Lord and my God, how great are Your grandeurs! We go about here below like foolish little shepherds, for while it seems that we are getting some knowledge of You it must amount to no more than nothing; for even in our own selves there are great secrets that we don't understand. I say "no more than nothing" because I'm comparing it to the many, many secrets that are in You, not because the grandeurs we see in You are not extraordinary; and that includes those we can attain knowledge of through Your works.

6. To return to the verse, what I think is helpful in it for explaining this matter is the idea of expansion. It seems that since that heavenly water begins to rise from this spring I'm mentioning that is deep within us, it swells and expands our whole interior being, producing ineffable blessings; nor does the soul even understand what is given to it there. It perceives a fragrance, let us say for now, as though there were in that interior depth a brazier giving off sweet-smelling perfumes. No

light is seen, nor is the place seen where the brazier is; but the warmth and the fragrant fumes spread through the entire soul and even often enough, as I have said,⁹ the body shares in them. See now that you understand me; no heat is felt, nor is there the scent of any perfume, for the experience is more delicate than an experience of these things; but I use the examples only so as to explain it to you. And let persons who have not experienced these things understand that truthfully they do happen and are felt in this way, and the soul understands them in a manner clearer than is my explanation right now. This spiritual delight is not something that can be imagined, because however diligent our efforts we cannot acquire it. The very experience of it makes us realize that it is not of the same metal as we ourselves but fashioned from the purest gold of the divine wisdom. Here, in my opinion, the faculties are not united but absorbed and looking as though in wonder at what they see.

7. It's possible that in dealing with these interior matters I might contradict something of what I said elsewhere. That's no surprise, because in the almost fifteen years¹⁰ since I wrote it the Lord may perhaps have given me clearer understanding in these matters than I had before. Now, as then, I could be completely mistaken—but I would not lie, because by God's mercy I'd rather suffer a thousand deaths. I speak of what I understand.

8. It seems clear to me the will must in some way be united with God's will. But it is in the effects and deeds following afterward that one discerns the true value of prayer; there is no better crucible for testing prayer. It is quite a great favor from our Lord if the person receiving the favor recognizes it, and a very great one if he doesn't turn back.

You will at once desire, my daughters, to obtain this prayer; and you are right, for, as I have said,¹¹ the soul will never understand the favors the Lord is granting there or the love with which He is drawing it nearer to Himself. It is good to try to understand how we can obtain such a favor; so I am going to tell you what I have understood about this.

9. Let's leave aside the times when our Lord is pleased to grant it because He wants to and for no other reason. He knows why; we don't have to meddle in this. After you have done what should be done by those in the previous dwelling places: humility! humility! By this means the Lord allows Himself to be conquered with regard to anything we want from Him. The first sign for seeing whether or not you have humility is that you do not think you deserve these favors and spiritual delights from the Lord or that you will receive them in your lifetime.

You will ask me how then one can obtain them without seeking them. I answer that for the following reasons there is no better way than the one I mentioned, of not striving for them. First, because the initial thing necessary for such favors is to love God without self-interest. Second, because there is a slight lack of humility in thinking that for our miserable services something so great can be obtained. Third, because the authentic preparation for these favors on the part of those of us who, after all, have offended Him is the desire to suffer and imitate the Lord rather than to have spiritual delights. Fourth, because His Majesty is not obliged to give them to us as He is to give us glory if we keep His commandments. (Without these favors we can be saved, and He knows better than we ourselves what is fitting for us and who of us truly loves Him. This is certain, I know. And I know persons who walk by the path of love as they ought to walk, that is, only so as to serve their Christ crucified; not only do these persons refuse to seek spiritual delights from Him or to desire them but they beseech Him not to give them these favors during their lifetime. This is true.) The fifth reason is that we would be laboring in vain; for since this water must not be drawn through aqueducts as was the previous water, we are little helped by tiring ourselves if the spring doesn't want to produce it. I mean that no matter how much we meditate or how much we try to squeeze something out and have tears, this water doesn't come in such a way. It is given only to whom God wills to give it and often when the soul is least thinking of it.

10. We belong to Him, daughters. Let Him do whatever He likes with us, bring us wherever He pleases. I really believe that

whoever humbles himself and is detached (I mean in fact because the detachment and humility must not be just in our thoughts—for they often deceive us—but complete) will receive the favor of this water from the Lord and many other favors that we don't know how to desire. May He be forever praised and blessed, amen.

Chapter 3

Deals with the prayer of recollection which for the most part the Lord gives before the prayer just mentioned. Tells about its effects and about those that come from that spiritual delight, given by the Lord, that was discussed in the previous chapter.

THE EFFECTS OF THIS PRAYER are many. I shall mention some. But first, I want to mention another kind of prayer that almost always begins before this one. Since I have spoken of such a prayer elsewhere,¹ I shall say little. It is a recollection that also seems to me to be supernatural because it doesn't involve being in the dark or closing the eyes, nor does it consist in any exterior thing, since without first wanting to do so, one does close one's eyes and desire solitude. It seems that without any contrivance the edifice is being built, by means of this recollection, for the prayer that was mentioned. The senses and exterior things seem to be losing their hold because the soul is recovering what it had lost.

2. They say that the soul enters within itself and, at other times, that it rises above itself.² With such terminology I wouldn't know how to clarify anything. This is what's wrong with me: that I think you will understand by my way of explaining, while perhaps I'm the only one who will understand myself. Let us suppose that these senses and faculties (for I have already mentioned that these powers are the people of this castle,³ which is the image I have taken for my explanation) have gone outside and have walked for days and years with strangers—enemies of the well-being of the castle. Having

seen their perdition they've already begun to approach the castle even though they may not manage to remain inside because the habit of doing so is difficult to acquire. But still they are not traitors, and they walk in the environs of the castle. Once the great King, who is in the center dwelling place of this castle, sees their good will, He desires in His wonderful mercy to bring them back to Him. Like a good shepherd, with a whistle so gentle that even they themselves almost fail to hear it, He makes them recognize His voice and stops them from going so far astray so that they will return to their dwelling place. And this shepherd's whistle has such power that they abandon the exterior things in which they were estranged from Him and enter the castle.

3. I don't think I've ever explained it as clearly as I have now. When God grants the favor it is a great help to seek Him within where He is found more easily and in a way more beneficial to us than when sought in creatures, as St. Augustine says after having looked for Him in many places.⁴ Don't think this recollection is acquired by the intellect striving to think about God within itself, or by the imagination imagining Him within itself. Such efforts are good and an excellent kind of meditation because they are founded on a truth, which is that God is within us. But this isn't the prayer of recollection because it is something each one can do—with the help of God, as should be understood of everything. But what I'm speaking of comes in a different way. Sometimes before one begins to think of God, these people are already inside the castle. I don't know in what way or how they heard their shepherd's whistle. It wasn't through the ears, because nothing is heard. But one noticeably senses a gentle drawing inward, as anyone who goes through this will observe, for I don't know how to make it clearer. It seems to me I have read where it was compared to a hedgehog curling up or a turtle drawing into its shell.⁵ (The one who wrote this example must have understood the experience well.) But these creatures draw inward whenever they want. In the case of this recollection, it doesn't come when we want it but when God wants to grant us the favor. I for myself hold that when His Majesty grants it, He does so to persons who

are already beginning to despise the things of the world. I don't say that those in the married state do so in deed, for they cannot, but in desire; for He calls such persons especially so that they might be attentive to interior matters. So I believe that if we desire to make room for His Majesty, He will give not only this but more, and give it to those whom He begins to call to advance further.

4. May whoever experiences this within himself praise God greatly because it is indeed right to recognize the favor and give thanks, for doing so will dispose one for other greater favors. And this recollection is a preparation for being able to listen, as is counselled in some books,⁶ so that the soul instead of striving to engage in discourse strives to remain attentive and aware of what the Lord is working in it. If His Majesty has not begun to absorb us, I cannot understand how the mind can be stopped. There's no way of doing so without bringing about more harm than good, although there has been a lengthy controversy on this matter among some spiritual persons. For my part I must confess my lack of humility, but those in favor of stopping the mind have never given me a reason for submitting to what they say. One of them tried to convince me with a certain book by the saintly Friar Peter of Alcántara⁷ — for I believe he is a saint — to whom I would submit because I know that he knew. And we read it together, and he says the same thing I do; although not in my words. But it is clear in what he says that love must be already awakened. It could be that I'm mistaken, but I have the following reasons.

5. First, in this work of the spirit the one who thinks less and has less desire to act does more. What we must do is beg like the needy poor before a rich and great emperor, and then lower our eyes and wait with humility. When through His secret paths it seems we understand that He hears us, then it is good to be silent since He has allowed us to remain near Him; and it will not be wrong to avoid working with the intellect — if we can work with it, I mean. But if we don't yet know whether this King has heard or seen us, we mustn't become fools. The soul does become quite a fool when it tries to induce this prayer, and it is left much drier; and the imagination perhaps

becomes more restless through the effort made not to think of anything. But the Lord desires that we beseech Him and call to mind that we are in His presence; He knows what is suitable for us. I cannot persuade myself to use human diligence in a matter in which it seems His Majesty has placed a limit, and I want to leave the diligence to Him. What He did not reserve to Himself are many other efforts we can make with His help, such as: penance, good deeds, and prayer—insofar as our wretchedness can do these things.

6. The second reason is that these interior works are all gentle and peaceful; doing something arduous would cause more harm than good. I call any force that we might want to use “something arduous”; for example, it would be arduous to hold one’s breath. Leave the soul in God’s hands, let Him do whatever He wants with it, with the greatest disinterest about your own benefit as is possible and the greatest resignation to the will of God.

The third reason is that the very care used not to think of anything will perhaps rouse the mind to think very much.

The fourth is that what is most essential and pleasing to God is that we be mindful of His honor and glory and forget ourselves and our own profit and comfort and delight. How is a person forgetful of self if he is so careful not to stir or even to allow his intellect or desires to be stirred to a longing for the greater glory of God, or if he rests in what he already has? When His Majesty desires the intellect to stop, He occupies it in another way and gives it a light so far above what we can attain that it remains absorbed. Then, without knowing how, the intellect is much better instructed than it was through all the soul’s efforts not to make use of it. Since God gave us our faculties that we might work with them and in this work they find their reward, there is no reason to charm them; we should let them perform their task until God appoints them to another greater one.

7. What I understand to be most fitting for the soul the Lord has desired to put in this dwelling place is that which has been said.⁸ And without any effort or noise the soul should

strive to cut down the rambling of the intellect—but not suspend either it or the mind; it is good to be aware that one is in God's presence and of who God is. If what it feels within itself absorbs it, well and good. But let it not strive to understand the nature of this recollection, for it is given to the will. Let the soul enjoy it without any endeavors other than some loving words, for even though we may not try in this prayer to go without thinking of anything, I know that often the intellect will be suspended, even though for only a very brief moment.

8. But as I said elsewhere⁹ the reason why in this kind of prayer—that is, the kind that is like the flowing spring in which the water does not come through aqueducts—the soul restrains itself or is restrained is its realization that it doesn't understand what it desires; and so the mind wanders from one extreme to the other, like a fool unable to rest in anything. (I am referring to the kind of prayer this dwelling place began with, for I have joined the prayer of recollection, which I should have mentioned first, with this one. The prayer of recollection is much less intense than the prayer of spiritual delight from God that I mentioned. But it is the beginning through which one goes to the other; for in the prayer of recollection, meditation, or the work of the intellect, must not be set aside.) The will has such deep rest in its God that the clamor of the intellect is a terrible bother to it. There is no need to pay any attention to this clamor, for doing so would make the will lose much of what it enjoys. But one should leave the intellect go and surrender oneself into the arms of love, for His Majesty will teach the soul what it must do at that point. Almost everything lies in finding oneself unworthy of so great a good and in being occupied with giving thanks.

9. In order to deal with the prayer of recollection I postponed mention of the effects or signs in souls to whom God, our Lord, gives this prayer of quiet. What an expansion or dilation of the soul is may be clearly understood from the example of a fount whose water doesn't overflow into a stream because the fount itself is constructed of such material that the more water there is flowing into it the larger the trough becomes. So it seems is the case with this prayer and many other marvels

that God grants to the soul, for He enables and prepares it so that it can keep everything within itself. Hence this interior sweetness and expansion can be verified in the fact that the soul is not as tied down as it was before in things pertaining to the service of God, but has much more freedom. Thus, in not being constrained by the fear of hell (because although there is even greater fear of offending God it loses servile fear here), this soul is left with great confidence that it will enjoy Him. The fear it used to have of doing penance and losing its health has disappeared, and it now thinks it will be able to do all things in God¹⁰ and has greater desire for penance than previously. The fear it used to have of trials it now sees to be tempered. Its faith is more alive; it knows that if it suffers trials for God, His Majesty will give it the grace to suffer them with patience. Sometimes it even desires them because there also remains a strong will to do something for God. Since its knowledge of God's grandeur grows, it considers itself to be more miserable. Because it has already experienced spiritual delight from God, it sees that worldly delights are like filth. It finds itself withdrawing from them little by little, and it is more master of itself for so doing. In sum, there is an improvement in all the virtues. It will continue to grow if it doesn't turn back now to offending God; because if it does, then everything will be lost however high on the summit the soul may be. Nor should it be understood that if God grants this favor once or twice to a soul all these good effects will be caused. It must persevere in receiving them, for in this perseverance lies all our good.

10. One strong warning I give to whoever finds himself in this state is that he guard very carefully against placing himself in the occasion of offending God. In this prayer the soul is not yet grown but is like a suckling child. If it turns away from its mother's breasts, what can be expected for it but death? I am very afraid that this will happen to anyone to whom God has granted this favor and who withdraws from prayer—unless he does so for a particularly special reason—or if he doesn't return quickly to prayer, for he will go from bad to worse. I know there is a great deal to fear in this matter. And I know some persons for whom I have felt quite sorry—and I've seen what

I'm speaking about — because they have turned away from One who with so much love wanted to be their friend and proved it by deeds. I advise them so strongly not to place themselves in the occasions of sin because the devil tries much harder for a soul of this kind than for very many to whom the Lord does not grant these favors. For such a soul can do a great deal of harm to the devil by getting others to follow it, and it could be of great benefit to God's Church. And even though the devil may have no other reason than to see who it is to whom His Majesty shows particular love, that's sufficient for him to wear himself out trying to lead the soul to perdition. So these souls suffer much combat, and if they go astray, they stray much more than do others.

You, Sisters, are free of dangers, from what we can know. From pride and vainglory may God deliver you. If the devil should counterfeit God's favors, this will be known by the fact that these good effects are not caused, but just the opposite.

11. There is one danger I want to warn you about (although I may have mentioned it elsewhere)¹¹ into which I have seen persons of prayer fall, especially women, for since we are weaker there is more occasion for what I'm about to say. It is that some have a weak constitution because of a great amount of penance, prayer, and keeping vigil, and even without these; in receiving some favor, their nature is overcome. Since they feel some consolation interiorly and a languishing and weakness exteriorly, they think they are experiencing a spiritual sleep (which is a prayer a little more intense than the prayer of quiet)¹² and they let themselves become absorbed. The more they allow this, the more absorbed they become because their nature is further weakened, and they fancy that they are being carried away in rapture. I call it being carried away in foolishness¹³ because it amounts to nothing more than wasting time and wearing down one's health. These persons feel nothing through their senses nor do they feel anything concerning God. One person happened to remain eight hours in this state. By sleeping and eating and avoiding so much penance, this person got rid of the stupor, for there was someone who understood her. She had misled both her confessor and other persons, as well as herself — for she hadn't intended to deceive.

I truly believe that the devil was trying to gain ground, and in this instance indeed he was beginning to gain no small amount.

12. It must be understood that when something is truly from God there is no languishing in the soul, even though there may be an interior and exterior languishing, for the soul experiences deep feelings on seeing itself close to God. Nor does the experience last so long, but for a very short while—although one becomes absorbed again. In such prayer, if the cause of it is not weakness, as I said,¹⁴ the body is not worn down nor is any external feeling produced.

13. For this reason let them take the advice that when they feel this languishing in themselves they tell the prioress and distract themselves from it insofar as they can. The prioress should make them give up so many hours for prayer so that they have only a very few and try to get them to sleep and eat well until their natural strength begins to return, if it has been lost through a lack of food and sleep. If a Sister's nature is so weak that this is not enough, may she believe me that God does not want her to practice anything but the active life, which also must be practiced in monasteries. They should let her get busy with different duties; and always take care that she not have a great deal of solitude, for she would lose her health completely. It will be quite a mortification for her; in how she bears this absence is the way the Lord wants to test her love for Him. And He will be pleased to give her strength back after some time. If He doesn't, she will gain through vocal prayer and through obedience and will merit what she would have merited otherwise, and perhaps more.

14. There could also be some persons with such weak heads and imaginations—and I have known some—to whom it seems that everything they think about they see. This is very dangerous. Because I shall perhaps treat of it later on, I'll say no more here. I have greatly enlarged upon this dwelling place because it is the one which more souls enter. Since it is, and since the natural and the supernatural are joined in it, the devil can do more harm. In those dwelling places still to be spoken of, the Lord doesn't give him so much leeway. May His Majesty be forever praised, amen.

THE FIFTH DWELLING PLACES

Contains Four Chapters

Chapter 1

*Begins to deal with how the soul is united to God in prayer.
Tells how one discerns whether there is any illusion.*

OSISTERS, HOW CAN I explain the riches and treasures and delights found in the fifth dwelling places? I believe it would be better not to say anything about these remaining rooms, for there is no way of knowing how to speak of them; neither is the intellect capable of understanding them nor can comparisons help in explaining them; earthly things are too coarse for such a purpose.

Send light from heaven, my Lord, that I might be able to enlighten these Your servants—for You have been pleased that some of them ordinarily enjoy these delights—so that they may not be deceived by the devil transforming himself into an angel of light.¹ For all their desires are directed toward pleasing You.

2. And although I have said “some,” there are indeed only a few who fail to enter this dwelling place of which I shall now speak. There are various degrees, and for that reason I say that most enter these places. But I believe that only a few will experience some of the things that I will say are in this room. Yet even if souls do no more than reach the door, God is being very merciful to them; although many are called few are chosen.² So I say now that all of us who wear this holy habit of Carmel are called to prayer and contemplation. This call explains our origin; we are the descendants of men who felt this call, of

those holy fathers on Mount Carmel who in such great solitude and contempt for the world sought this treasure, this precious pearl of contemplation that we are speaking about. Yet few of us dispose ourselves that the Lord may communicate it to us. In exterior matters we are proceeding well so that we will reach what is necessary; but in the practice of the virtues that are necessary for arriving at this point we need very, very much and cannot be careless in either small things or great. So, my Sisters, since in some way we can enjoy heaven on earth, be brave in begging the Lord to give us His grace in such a way that nothing will be lacking through our own fault; that He show us the way and strengthen the soul that it may dig until it finds this hidden treasure.³ The truth is that the treasure lies within our very selves. This is what I would like to know how to explain, if the Lord would enable me to do so.

3. I said “strengthen the soul” so that you will understand that bodily strength is not necessary for those to whom God does not give it. He doesn’t make it impossible for anyone to buy His riches. He is content if each one gives what he has. Blessed be so great a God. But reflect, daughters, that He doesn’t want you to hold on to anything, so that you will be able to enjoy the favors we are speaking of. Whether you have little or much, He wants everything for Himself; and in conformity with what you know you have given you will receive greater or lesser favors. There is no better proof for recognizing whether our prayer has reached union or not.

4. Don’t think this union is some kind of dreamy state like the one I mentioned before.⁴ I say “dreamy state” because it only seems that the soul is asleep; for neither does it really think it is asleep nor does it feel awake. There is no need here to use any technique to suspend the mind since all the faculties are asleep in this state—and truly asleep—to the things of the world and to ourselves. As a matter of fact, during the time that the union lasts the soul is left as though without its senses, for it has no power to think even if it wants to. In loving, if it does love, it doesn’t understand how or what it is it loves or what it would want. In sum, it is like one who in every respect has died to the world so as to live more completely in God.

Thus the death is a delightful one, an uprooting from the soul of all the operations it can have while being in the body. The death is a delightful one because in truth it seems that in order to dwell more perfectly in God the soul is so separated from the body that I don't even know if it has life enough to breathe. (I was just now thinking about this, and it seems to me that it doesn't — at least if it does breathe, it is unaware it is doing so.) Nonetheless, its whole intellect would want to be occupied in understanding something of what is felt. And since the soul does not have the energy to attain to this, it is so stunned that, even if consciousness is not completely lost, neither a hand nor a foot stirs, as we say here below when a person is in such a swoon that we think he is dead.

O secrets of God! I would never tire of trying to explain them if I thought I could in some way manage to do so; thus I will say a thousand foolish things in order that I might at times succeed and that we might give great praise to the Lord.

5. I said that this union was not some kind of dreamy state,⁵ because even if the experience in the dwelling place that was just mentioned is abundant the soul remains doubtful that it was union. It doubts whether it imagined the experience; whether it was asleep; whether the experience was given by God; or whether the devil transformed himself into an angel of light.⁶ It is left with a thousand suspicions. That it has them is good, for, as I have said,⁷ even our own nature can sometimes deceive us in that dwelling place. Though there is not so much room for poisonous things to enter, some tiny lizards do enter; since these lizards have slender heads they can poke their heads in anywhere. And even though they do no harm, especially if one pays no attention to them, as I said,⁸ they are often a bother since they are little thoughts proceeding from the imagination and from what I mentioned. But however slender they may be, these little lizards cannot enter this fifth dwelling place; for there is neither imagination, nor memory, nor intellect that can impede this good. And I would dare say that if the prayer is truly that of union with God the devil cannot even enter or do any damage. His Majesty is so joined and united with the essence of the soul that the devil will not dare approach nor will he even

know about this secret. And this is obvious. Since as they say, he doesn't know our mind, he will have less knowledge of something so secret; for God doesn't even entrust this to our own mind. Oh what a great good, a state in which this accursed one does us no harm! Thus the soul is left with such wonderful blessings because God works within it without anyone disturbing Him, not even ourselves. What will He not give, who is so fond of giving and who can give all that He wants?

6. It seems I have left you confused by saying "if it is union" and that there are other unions. And indeed how true it is that there are! Even though these unions regard vain things, the devil will use such things to transport us when they are greatly loved. But he doesn't do so in the way God does, or with the delight and satisfaction of soul, or with the peace and joy. This union is above all earthly joys, above all delights, above all consolations, and still more than that. It doesn't matter where those spiritual or earthly joys come from, for the feeling is very different as you will have experienced. I once said⁹ that the difference is like that between feeling something on the rough outer covering of the body or in the marrow of the bones. And that was right on the mark, for I don't know how to say it better.

7. It seems to me that you're still not satisfied, for you will think you can be mistaken and that these interior things are something difficult to examine. What was said will be sufficient for anyone who has experienced union. Yet, because the difference between union and the previous experience is great, I want to mention a clear sign by which you will be sure against error or doubts about whether the union is from God. His Majesty has brought it to my memory today, and in my opinion it is the sure sign. In difficult matters even though it seems to me I understand and that I speak the truth I always use this expression "it seems to me." For if I am mistaken, I am very much prepared to believe what those who have a great deal of learning say. Even though they have not experienced these things, very learned men have a certain "I don't know what"; for since God destines them to give light to His Church, He enlightens them that they might acknowledge a truth when presented

with it. And if they do not live a dissipated life but are God's servants, they are never surprised by His grandeurs; they have come to understand well that He can do ever more and more. And, finally, even though some things are not so well explained, these learned men will find other things in their books that will show that these things could take place.

8. I have had a great deal of experience with learned men, and have also had experience with half-learned, fearful ones; these latter cost me dearly.¹⁰ At least I think that anyone who refuses to believe that God can do much more or that He has considered and continues to consider it good sometimes to communicate favors to His creatures, has indeed closed the door to receiving them. Therefore, Sisters, let this never happen to you, but believe that God can do far more and don't turn your attention to whether the ones to whom He grants His favors are good or bad; for His Majesty knows this, as I have told you.¹¹ There is no reason for us to meddle in the matter, but with humility and simplicity of heart we should serve and praise Him for His works and marvels.

9. Well then, to return to the sign that I say is the true one,¹² you now see that God has made this soul a fool with regard to all so as better to impress upon it true wisdom. For during the time of this union it neither sees, nor hears, nor understands, because the union is always short and seems to the soul even much shorter than it probably is. God so places Himself in the interior of that soul that when it returns to itself it can in no way doubt that it was in God and God was in it. This truth remains with it so firmly that even though years go by without God's granting that favor again, the soul can neither forget nor doubt that it was in God and God was in it. This certitude is what matters now, for I shall speak of the effects of this prayer afterward.¹³

10. Now, you will ask me, how did the soul see this truth or understand if it didn't see or understand anything? I don't say that it then saw the truth but that afterward it sees the truth clearly, not because of a vision but because of a certitude remaining in the soul that only God can place there. I know a person who hadn't learned that God was in all things by

presence, power, and essence, and through a favor of this kind that God granted her she came to believe it. After asking a half-learned man of the kind I mentioned¹⁴ — he knew as little as she had known before God enlightened her — she was told that God was present only by grace. Such was her own conviction that even after this she didn't believe him and asked others who told her the truth, with which she was greatly consoled.¹⁵

11. Don't be mistaken by thinking that this certitude has to do with a corporal form, as in the case of the bodily presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament even though we do not see Him. Here the matter isn't like that; it concerns only the divinity. How, then, is it that what we do not see leaves this certitude? I don't know; these are His works. But I do know I speak the truth. And I would say that whoever does not receive this certitude does not experience union of the whole soul with God, but union of some faculty, or that he experiences one of the many other kinds of favors God grants souls. In regard to all these favors we have to give up looking for reasons to see how they've come about. Since our intellect cannot understand this union why do we have to make this effort? It's enough for us to see that He who is the cause of it is almighty. Since we have no part at all to play in bringing it about no matter how much effort we put forth, but it is God who does so, let us not desire the capacity to understand this union.

12. Now I recall, in saying that we have no part to play, what you have heard the bride say in the *Song of Songs*: *He brought me into the wine cellar* (or, placed me there, I believe it says).¹⁶ And it doesn't say that she went. And it says also that she went looking about in every part of the city for her Beloved.¹⁷ I understand this union to be the wine cellar where the Lord wishes to place us when He desires and as He desires. But however great the effort we make to do so, we cannot enter. His Majesty must place us there and enter Himself into the center of our soul. And that He may show His marvels more clearly He doesn't want our will to have any part to play, for it has been entirely surrendered to Him. Neither does He want the door of the faculties and of the senses to be opened, for

they are all asleep. But He wants to enter the center of the soul without going through any door, as He entered the place where His disciples were when He said, *pax vobis*;¹⁸ or as He left the tomb without lifting away the stone. Further on you will see in the last dwelling place¹⁹ how His Majesty desires that the soul enjoy Him in its own center even much more than here.

13. O daughters, how much we shall see if we don't want to have anything more to do with our own lowliness and misery and if we understand that we are unworthy of being servants of a Lord who is so great we cannot comprehend His wonders! May He be forever praised, amen.

Chapter 2

Continues on the same topic. Explains the prayer of union through an exquisite comparison. Tells about the effects it leaves in the soul. The chapter is very important.

IT WILL SEEM TO YOU that everything has already been said about what there is to see in this dwelling place. Yet a lot is missing; for, as I said,¹ there are various degrees of intensity. With regard to the nature of union, I don't believe I'd know how to say anything more. But when souls to whom God grants these favors prepare themselves, there are many things to say about the Lord's work in them. I shall speak of some of these and tell about the state the soul is left in. To explain things better I want to use a helpful comparison; it is good for making us see how, even though we can do nothing in this work done by the Lord, we can do much by disposing ourselves so that His Majesty may grant us this favor.

2. You must have already heard about His marvels manifested in the way silk originates, for only He could have invented something like that. The silkworms come from seeds about the size of little grains of pepper. (I have never seen this but heard of it, and so if something in the explanation gets distorted it won't be my fault.) When the warm weather comes

and the leaves begin to appear on the mulberry tree, the seeds start to live, for they are dead until then. The worms nourish themselves on mulberry leaves until, having grown to full size, they settle on some twigs. There with their little mouths they themselves go about spinning the silk and making some very thick little cocoons in which they enclose themselves. The silkworm, which is fat and ugly, then dies, and a little white butterfly, which is very pretty, comes forth from the cocoon. Now if this were not seen but recounted to us as having happened in other times, who would believe it? Or what reasonings could make us conclude that a thing as nonrational as a worm or a bee could be so diligent in working for our benefit and with so much industriousness? And the poor little worm loses its life in the challenge. This is enough, Sisters, for a period of meditation even though I may say no more to you; in it you can consider the wonders and the wisdom of our God. Well now, what would happen if we knew the property of every created thing. It is very beneficial for us to busy ourselves thinking of these grandeurs and delighting in being brides of a King so wise and powerful.

3. Let's return to what I was saying. This silkworm, then, starts to live when by the heat of the Holy Spirit it begins to benefit through the general help given to us all by God and through the remedies left by Him to His Church, by going to confession, reading good books, and hearing sermons, which are the remedies that a soul, dead in its carelessness and sins and placed in the midst of occasions, can make use of. It then begins to live and to sustain itself by these things, and by good meditations, until it is grown. Its being grown is what is relevant to what I'm saying, for these other things have little importance here.

4. Well once this silkworm is grown—in the beginning I dealt with its growth²—it begins to spin the silk and build the house wherein it will die. I would like to point out here that this house is Christ. Somewhere, it seems to me, I have read or heard that our life is hidden in Christ or in God (both are the same), or that our life is Christ.³ Whether the quotation is exact or not doesn't matter for what I intend.

5. Well see here, daughters, what we can do through the help of God: His Majesty Himself, as He does in this prayer of union, becomes the dwelling place we build for ourselves. It seems I'm saying that we can build up God and take Him away since I say that He is the dwelling place and we ourselves can build it so as to place ourselves in it. And, indeed, we can! Not that we can take God away or build Him up, but we can take away from ourselves and build up, as do these little silkworms. For we will not have finished doing all that we can in this work when, to the little we do, which is nothing, God will unite Himself, with His greatness, and give it such high value that the Lord Himself will become the reward of this work. Thus, since it was He who paid the highest price, His Majesty wants to join our little labors with the great ones He suffered so that all the work may become one.

6. Therefore, courage, my daughters! Let's be quick to do this work and weave this little cocoon by getting rid of our self-love and self-will, our attachment to any earthly thing, and by performing deeds of penance, prayer, mortification, obedience, and of all the other things you know. Would to heaven that we would do what we know we must; and we are instructed about what we must do. Let it die; let this silkworm die, as it does in completing what it was created to do! And you will see how we see God, as well as ourselves placed inside His greatness, as is this little silkworm within its cocoon. Keep in mind that I say "see God," in the sense of what I mentioned⁴ concerning that which is felt in this kind of union.

7. Now, then, let's see what this silkworm does, for that's the reason I've said everything else. When the soul is, in this prayer, truly dead to the world, a little white butterfly comes forth. Oh, greatness of God! How transformed the soul is when it comes out of this prayer after having been placed within the greatness of God and so closely joined with Him for a little while—in my opinion the union never lasts for as much as a half hour. Truly, I tell you that the soul doesn't recognize itself. Look at the difference there is between an ugly worm and a little white butterfly; that's what the difference is here. The soul doesn't know how it could have merited so much

good—from where this good may have come I mean, for it well knows that it doesn't merit this blessing. It sees within itself a desire to praise the Lord; it would want to dissolve and die a thousand deaths for Him. It soon begins to experience a desire to suffer great trials without its being able to do otherwise. There are the strongest desires for penance, for solitude, and that all might know God; and great pain comes to it when it sees that He is offended. I shall treat of these things more particularly in the next dwelling place⁵; although what is in this dwelling place and the next are almost identical, the force of the effects is very different. As I have said,⁶ if after God brings a soul here it makes the effort to advance, it will see great things.

8. Oh, now, to see the restlessness of this little butterfly, even though it has never been quieter and calmer in its life, is something to praise God for! And the difficulty is that it doesn't know where to alight and rest. Since it has experienced such wonderful rest, all that it sees on earth displeases it, especially if God gives it this wine often. Almost each time it gains new treasures. It no longer has any esteem for the works it did while a worm, which was to weave the cocoon little by little; it now has wings. How can it be happy walking step by step when it can fly? On account of its desires, everything it can do for God becomes little in its own eyes. It doesn't wonder as much at what the saints suffered now that it understands through experience how the Lord helps and transforms a soul, for it doesn't recognize itself or its image. The weakness it previously seemed to have with regard to doing penance it now finds is its strength. Its attachment to relatives or friends or wealth (for neither its actions, nor its determination, nor its desire to withdraw were enough; rather, in its opinion, it was more attached to everything) is now so looked upon that it grieves when obliged to do what is necessary in this regard so as not to offend God. Everything wearies it, for it has learned through experience that creatures cannot give it true rest.

9. It seems I have been lengthy, but I could say much more; and whoever has received this favor from God will see that I've been brief. So, there is no reason to be surprised that this little

butterfly seeks rest again since it feels estranged from earthly things. Well then, where will the poor little thing go? It can't return to where it came from; as was said,⁷ we are powerless, however much we do, to bring about this favor until God is again pleased to grant it. O Lord, what new trials begin for this soul! Who would say such a thing after a favor so sublime? Briefly, in one way or another, there must be a cross while we live. And with respect to anyone who says that after he arrived here he always enjoyed rest and delight I would say that he never arrived but that perhaps he had experienced some spiritual delight—if he had entered into the previous dwelling place—and his experience had been helped along by natural weakness or perhaps even by the devil who gives him peace so as afterward to wage much greater war against him.

10. I don't mean to say that those who arrive here do not have peace; they do have it, and it is very deep. For the trials themselves are so valuable and have such good roots that although very severe they give rise to peace and happiness. From the very unhappiness caused by worldly things arises the ever so painful desire to leave this world. Any relief the soul has comes from the thought that God wants it to be living in this exile; yet even this is not enough, because in spite of all these benefits it is not entirely surrendered to God's will, as will be seen further on⁸—although it doesn't fail to conform itself. But it conforms with a great feeling that it can do no more because no more has been given it, and with many tears. Every time it is in prayer this regret is its pain. In some way perhaps the sorrow proceeds from the deep pain it feels at seeing that God is offended and little esteemed in this world and that many souls are lost, heretics as well as Moors; although those that grieve it most are Christians. Even though it sees that God's mercy is great—for, however wicked their lives, these Christians can make amends and be saved—it fears that many are being condemned.

11. Oh, greatness of God! A few years ago—and even perhaps days—this soul wasn't mindful of anything but itself. Who has placed it in the midst of such painful concerns? Even were we to meditate for many years we wouldn't be able to feel

them as painfully as does this soul now. Well, God help me, wouldn't it be enough if for many days and years I strove to think about the tremendous evil of an offense against God and that those souls who are condemned are His children and my brothers and about the dangers in which we live and how good it is for us to leave this miserable life? Not at all, daughters; the grief that is felt here is not like that of this world. We can, with God's favor, feel the grief that comes from thinking about these things a great deal, but such grief doesn't reach the intimate depths of our being as does the pain suffered in this state, for it seems that the pain breaks and grinds the soul into pieces, without the soul's striving for it or even at times wanting it. Well, what is this pain? Where does it come from? I shall tell you.

12. Haven't you heard it said of the bride—for I have already mentioned it elsewhere here but not in this sense⁹—that God brought her into the inner wine cellar and put charity in order within her?¹⁰ Well, that is what I mean. Since that soul now surrenders itself into His hands and its great love makes it so surrendered that it neither knows nor wants anything more than what He wants with her (for God will never, in my judgment, grant this favor save to a soul that He takes for His own), He desires that, without its understanding how, it may go forth from this union impressed with His seal. For indeed the soul does no more in this union than does the wax when another impresses a seal on it. The wax doesn't impress the seal upon itself; it is only disposed—I mean by being soft. And even in order to be disposed, it doesn't soften itself but remains still and gives its consent. Oh, goodness of God; everything must be at a cost to You! All You want is our will and that there be no impediment in the wax.

13. Well now, you see here, Sisters, what our God does in this union so that this soul may recognize itself as His own. He gives from what He has, which is what His Son had in this life. He cannot grant us a higher favor. Who could have had a greater desire to leave this life? And so His Majesty said at the Last Supper: *I have earnestly desired.*¹¹

Well then, how is it, Lord, that You weren't thinking of the

laborious death You were about to suffer, so painful and frightful? You answer: “No, my great love and the desire I have that souls be saved are incomparably more important than these sufferings; and the very greatest sorrows that I have suffered and do suffer, after being in the world, are not enough to be considered anything at all in comparison with this love and desire to save souls.”

14. This is true, for I have often reflected on the matter. I know the torment a certain soul of my acquaintance¹² suffers and has suffered at seeing our Lord offended. The pain is so unbearable that she desires to die much more than to suffer it. If a soul with so little charity when compared to Christ’s—for its charity could then be considered almost nonexistent—felt this torment to be so unbearable, what must have been the feeling of our Lord Jesus Christ? And what kind of life must He have suffered since all things were present to Him and He was always witnessing the serious offenses committed against His Father? I believe without a doubt that these sufferings were much greater than were those of His most sacred Passion. At the time of His Passion He already saw an end to these trials and with this awareness as well as the happiness of seeing a remedy for us in His death and of showing us the love He had for His Father in suffering so much for Him, His sorrows were tempered. These sorrows are also tempered here below by those who with the strength that comes from love perform great penances, for they almost don’t feel them; rather they would want to do more and more—and everything they do seems little to them. Well, what must it have been for His Majesty to find Himself with so excellent an occasion for showing His Father how completely obedient He was to Him, and with love for His neighbor? Oh, great delight, to suffer in doing the will of God! But I consider it so difficult to see the many offenses committed so continually against His Majesty and the many souls going to hell that I believe only one day of that pain would have been sufficient to end many lives; how much more one life, if He had been no more than man.

Chapter 3

Continues on the same subject. Tells about another kind of union the soul can reach with God's help and of how important love of neighbor is for this union. The chapter is very useful.

WELL NOW LET US get back to our little dove¹ and see something about what God gives it in this state. It must always be understood that one has to strive to go forward in the service of our Lord and in self-knowledge. For if a person does no more than receive this favor and if, as though already securely in possession of something, she grows careless in her life and turns aside from the heavenly path, which consists of keeping the commandments, that which happens to the silkworm will happen to her. For it gives forth the seed that produces other silkworms, and itself dies forever. I say that it "gives forth the seed" because I hold that it is God's desire that a favor so great not be given in vain; if a person doesn't herself benefit, the favor will benefit others. For since the soul is left with these desires and virtues that were mentioned, it always brings profit to other souls during the time that it continues to live virtuously; and they catch fire from its fire. And even when the soul has itself lost this fire, the inclination to benefit others will remain, and the soul delights in explaining the favors God grants to whoever loves and serves Him.

2. I know a person to whom this happened.² Although she had gone far astray, she enjoyed helping others through the favors God had granted her and showing the way of prayer to those who didn't understand it; and she did a great deal of good. Afterward the Lord again gave her light. It's true that she still hadn't experienced the effects that were mentioned; but how many there must be, like Judas, whom the Lord calls to the apostolate by communing with them, and like Saul, whom He calls to be kings, who afterward through their own fault go astray! Thus we can conclude, Sisters, that, in order to merit more and more and avoid getting lost like such persons, our security lies in obedience and refusal to deviate from God's

law. I'm speaking to those to whom He has granted similar favors, and even to everyone.

3. It seems to me that despite all I've said about this dwelling place, the matter is still somewhat obscure. Since so much gain comes from entering this place, it will be good to avoid giving the impression that those to whom the Lord doesn't give things that are so supernatural are left without hope. True union can very well be reached, with God's help, if we make the effort to obtain it by keeping our wills fixed only on that which is God's will. Oh, how many of us there are who will say we do this, and it will seem to us that we don't want anything else and that we would die for this truth, as I believe I have said!³ Well I tell you, and I will often repeat it, that if what you say is true you will have obtained this favor from the Lord, and you needn't care at all about the other delightful union that was mentioned. That which is most valuable in the delightful union is that it proceeds from this union of which I'm now speaking; and one cannot arrive at the delightful union if the union coming from being resigned to God's will is not very certain. Oh, how desirable is this union with God's will! Happy the soul that has reached it. Such a soul will live tranquilly in this life, and in the next as well. Nothing in earthly events afflicts it unless it finds itself in some danger of losing God or sees that He is offended: neither sickness, nor poverty, nor death — unless the death is of someone who will be missed by God's Church — for this soul sees well that the Lord knows what He is doing better than it knows what it is desiring.

4. You must note that there are different kinds of sufferings. Some sufferings are produced suddenly by our human nature, and the same goes for consolations, and even by the charity of compassion for one's neighbor, as our Lord experienced when He raised Lazarus.⁴ Being united with God's will doesn't take these experiences away, nor do they disturb the soul with a restless, disquieting passion that lasts a long while. These sufferings pass quickly. As I have said concerning consolations in prayer,⁵ it seems they do not reach the soul's depth but only the senses and faculties. They are found in the previous dwelling places; but they do not enter the last ones still to be explained,

since the suspension of the faculties is necessary in order to reach these, as has been said.⁶ The Lord has the power to enrich souls through many paths and bring them to these dwelling places, without using the short cut that was mentioned.

5. Nonetheless, take careful note, daughters, that it is necessary for the silkworm to die, and, moreover, at a cost to yourselves. In the delightful union,⁷ the experience of seeing oneself in so new a life greatly helps one to die; in the other union,⁸ it's necessary that, while living in this life, we ourselves put the silkworm to death. I confess this latter death will require a great deal of effort, or more than that; but it has its value. Thus if you come out victorious the reward will be much greater. But there is no reason to doubt the possibility of this death any more than that of true union with the will of God. This union with God's will is the union I have desired all my life; it is the union I ask the Lord for always and the one that is clearest and safest.

6. But alas for us, how few there must be who reach it; although whoever guards himself against offending the Lord and has entered religious life thinks he has done everything! Oh, but there remain some worms, unrecognized until, like those in the story of Jonah that gnawed away the ivy,⁹ they have gnawed away the virtues. This happens through self-love, self-esteem, judging one's neighbors (even though in little things), a lack of charity for them, and not loving them as ourselves. For even though, while crawling along, we fulfill our obligation and no sin is committed, we don't advance very far in what is required for complete union with the will of God.

7. What do you think His will is, daughters? That we be completely perfect. See what we lack to be one with Him and His Father as His Majesty asked.¹⁰ I tell you I am writing this with much pain upon seeing myself so far away—and all through my own fault. The Lord doesn't have to grant us great delights for this union; sufficient is what He has given us in His Son, who would teach us the way. Don't think the matter lies in my being so conformed to the will of God that if my father or brother dies I don't feel it, or that if there are trials or sicknesses I suffer them happily. Such an attitude is good, and

sometimes it's a matter of discretion because we can't do otherwise, and we make a virtue of necessity. How many things like these the philosophers did, or even, though not like these, other things, such as acquiring much learning. Here in our religious life the Lord asks of us only two things: love of His Majesty and love of our neighbor. These are what we must work for. By observing them with perfection, we do His will and so will be united with Him. But how far, as I have said, we are from doing these two things for so great a God as we ought! May it please His Majesty to give us His grace so that we might merit, if we want, to reach this state that lies within our power.

8. The most certain sign, in my opinion, as to whether or not we are observing these two laws is whether we observe well the love of neighbor. We cannot know whether or not we love God, although there are strong indications for recognizing that we do love Him; but we can know whether we love our neighbor.¹¹ And be certain that the more advanced you see you are in love for your neighbor the more advanced you will be in the love of God, for the love His Majesty has for us is so great that to repay us for our love of neighbor He will in a thousand ways increase the love we have for Him. I cannot doubt this.

9. It's important for us to walk with careful attention to how we are proceeding in this matter, for if we practice love of neighbor with great perfection, we will have done everything. I believe that, since our nature is bad, we will not reach perfection in the love of neighbor if that love doesn't rise from love of God as its root. Since this is so important to us, Sisters, let's try to understand ourselves even in little things, and pay no attention to any big plans that sometimes suddenly come to us during prayer in which it seems we will do wonders for our neighbor and even for just one soul so that it may be saved. If afterward our deeds are not in conformity with those plans, there will be no reason to believe that we will accomplish the plans. I say the same about humility and all the virtues. Great are the wiles of the devil; to make us think we have one virtue—when we don't—he would circle hell a thousand times. And he is right because such a notion is very harmful, for these feigned virtues never come without some vainglory since they

rise from that source; just as virtues from God are free of it as well as of pride.

10. I am amused sometimes to see certain souls who think when they are at prayer that they would like to be humiliated and publicly insulted for God, and afterward they would hide a tiny fault if they could; or, if they have not committed one and yet are charged with it—God deliver us! Well, let anyone who can't bear such a thing be careful not to pay attention to what he has by himself determined—in his opinion—to do. As a matter of fact the determination was not in the will—for when there is a true determination of the will it's another matter—but a work of the imagination; it is in the imagination that the devil produces his wiles and deceits. And with women or unlearned people he can produce a great number, for we don't know how the faculties differ from one another and from the imagination, nor do we know about a thousand other things there are in regard to interior matters. Oh, Sisters, how clearly one sees the degree to which love of neighbor is present in some of you, and how clearly one sees the deficiency in those who lack such perfection! If you were to understand how important this virtue is for us you wouldn't engage in any other study.

11. When I see souls very earnest in trying to understand the prayer they have and very sullen when they are in it—for it seems they don't dare let their minds move or stir lest a bit of their spiritual delight and devotion be lost—it makes me realize how little they understand of the way by which union is attained; they think the whole matter lies in these things. No, Sisters, absolutely not; works are what the Lord wants! He desires that if you see a Sister who is sick to whom you can bring some relief, you have compassion on her and not worry about losing this devotion; and that if she is suffering pain, you also feel it; and that, if necessary, you fast so that she might eat—not so much for her sake as because you know it is your Lord's desire. This is true union with His will, and if you see a person praised, the Lord wants you to be much happier than if you yourself were being praised. This, indeed, is easy, for if you have humility you will feel sorry to see yourself praised. But this

happiness that comes when the virtues of the Sisters are known is a very good thing; and when we see some fault in them, it is also a very good thing to be sorry and hide the fault as though it were our own.

12. I have said a lot on this subject elsewhere,¹² because I see, Sisters, that if we fail in love of neighbor we are lost. May it please the Lord that this will never be so; for if you do not fail, I tell you that you shall receive from His Majesty the union that was mentioned. When you see yourselves lacking in this love, even though you have devotion and gratifying experiences that make you think you have reached this stage, and you experience some little suspension in the prayer of quiet (for to some it then appears that everything has been accomplished), believe me you have not reached union. And beg our Lord to give you this perfect love of neighbor. Let His Majesty have a free hand, for He will give you more than you know how to desire because you are striving and making every effort to do what you can about this love. And force your will to do the will of your Sisters in everything even though you may lose your rights; forget your own good for their sakes no matter how much resistance your nature puts up; and, when the occasion arises, strive to accept work yourself so as to relieve your neighbor of it. Don't think that it won't cost you anything or that you will find everything done for you. Look at what our Spouse's love for us cost Him; in order to free us from death, He died that most painful death of the cross.

Chapter 4

Continues with the same subject, explaining further this kind of prayer.¹ Tells how important it is to walk with care because the devil himself uses a great deal of care in trying to make one turn back from what was begun.

IT SEEMS TO ME you have a desire to see what this little dove is doing and where it rests since as was explained it rests neither in spiritual delights nor in earthly consolations. Its flight is higher, and I cannot satisfy your desire until the last dwelling place. May it please God that I then remember or have the time to write of this. About five months have passed since I began,² and because my head is in no condition to read over what I've written, everything will have to continue on without order, and perhaps some things will be said twice. Since this work is for my Sisters, the disorder won't matter much.

2. Nonetheless, I want to explain more to you about what I think this prayer of union is. In accordance with my style, I shall draw a comparison. Later on we'll say more about this little butterfly. Although it is always bearing fruit by doing good for itself and for other souls, it never stops to rest, because it fails to find its true repose.

3. You've already often heard that God espouses souls spiritually. Blessed be His mercy that wants so much to be humbled! And even though the comparison may be a coarse one I cannot find another that would better explain what I mean than the sacrament of marriage. This spiritual espousal is different in kind from marriage, for in these matters that we are dealing with there is never anything that is not spiritual. Corporal things are far distant from them, and the spiritual joys the Lord gives when compared to the delights married people must experience are a thousand leagues distant. For it is all a matter of love united with love, and the actions of love are most pure and so extremely delicate and gentle that there is no way of explaining them, but the Lord knows how to make them very clearly felt.

4. It seems to me that the prayer of union does not yet reach the stage of spiritual betrothal. Here below when two people are to be engaged, there is discussion about whether they are alike, whether they love each other, and whether they might meet together so as to become more satisfied with each other. So, too, in the case of this union with God, the agreement has been made, and this soul is well informed about the goodness of her Spouse and determined to do His will in everything and in as many ways as she sees might make Him happy. And His Majesty, as one who understands clearly whether these things about His betrothed are so, is happy with her. As a result He grants this mercy, for He desired her to know Him more and that they might meet together, as they say, and be united.³ We can say that union is like this, for it passes in a very short time. In it there no longer takes place the exchanging of gifts, but the soul sees secretly who this Spouse is that she is going to accept. Through the work of the senses and the faculties she couldn't in any way or in a thousand years understand what she understands here in the shortest time. But being who He is, the Spouse from that meeting alone leaves her more worthy for the joining of hands, as they say. The soul is left so much in love that it does for its part all it can to avoid disturbing this divine betrothal. But if it is careless about placing its affection in something other than Him, it loses everything. And the loss is as great as the favors He was granting her, and cannot be exaggerated.

5. For this reason, I ask Christian souls whom the Lord has brought to these boundaries that for His sake they not grow careless but withdraw from occasions. Even in this state the soul is not so strong that it can place itself in the occasions as it will be after the betrothal is made. The betrothal belongs to the dwelling place we shall speak of after this one. This present communication amounts to no more than a meeting, as they say. And the devil will go about very carefully in order to fight against and prevent this betrothal. Afterward, since he sees the soul entirely surrendered to the Spouse he doesn't dare do so much, because he fears it. He has experienced that if sometimes he tries he is left with a great loss; and the soul, with further gain.

6. I tell you, daughters, that I have known persons who had ascended high and had reached this union, who were turned back and won over by the devil with his deep cunning and deceit. All hell must join for such a purpose because, as I have often said,⁴ in losing one soul of this kind, not only one is lost but a multitude. The devil already has experience in this matter. Look at the multitude of souls God draws to Himself by means of one. He is to be greatly praised for the thousands converted by the martyrs: for a young girl like St. Ursula; for those the devil must have lost through St. Dominic, St. Francis, and other founders of religious orders, and those he now loses through Father Ignatius, the one who founded the Society. Clearly, all of these received, as we read, similar favors from God. How would this have come about if they hadn't made the effort not to lose through their own fault so divine an espousal? Oh, my daughters, how prepared this Lord is to grant us favors now just as He has granted them to others in the past. And, in part, He is even more in need that we desire to receive them, for there are fewer now who care about His honor than there were then. We love ourselves very much; there's an extraordinary amount of prudence we use so as not to lose our rights. Oh, what great deception! May the Lord through His mercy enlighten us so that we do not fall into similar darknesses.

7. You will ask me or be in doubt concerning two things: First, if the soul is as ready to do the will of God as was mentioned,⁵ how can it be deceived since it doesn't want to do anything but His will in all? Second, what are the ways in which the devil can enter so dangerously that your soul goes astray? For you are so withdrawn from the world, so close to the sacraments, and in the company, we could say, of angels, and through the Lord's goodness you have no other desire than to serve God and please Him in everything. With those who are already in the midst of worldly occasions such a turn backward would not be surprising. I say that you are right about this, for God has granted us a great deal of mercy. But when I see, as I have said,⁶ that Judas was in the company of the Apostles and conversing always with God Himself and listening to His words, I understand that there is no security in these things.

8. In answer to the first, I say that if this soul were always attached to God's will it is clear that it would not go astray. But the devil comes along with some skillful deception and, under the color of good, confuses it with regard to little things and induces it to get taken up with some of them that he makes it think are good. Then little by little he darkens the intellect, cools the will's ardor, and makes self-love grow until in one way or another he withdraws the soul from the will of God and brings it to his own.

Thus, we have an answer to the second doubt. There is no enclosure so fenced in that he cannot enter, or desert so withdrawn that he fails to go there. And I still have something more to say: perhaps the Lord permits this so as to observe the behavior of that soul He wishes to set up as a light for others. If there is going to be a downfall, it's better that it happen in the beginning rather than later, when it would be harmful to many.

9. The diligence on our part that comes to my mind as being the most effective is the following. First, we must always ask God in prayer to sustain us, and very often think that if He abandons us we will soon end in the abyss, as is true; and we must never trust in ourselves since it would be foolish to do so. Then, we should walk with special care and attention, observing how we are proceeding in the practice of virtue: whether we are getting better or worse in some areas, especially in love for one another, in the desire to be considered the least among the Sisters, and in the performance of ordinary tasks. For if we look out for these things and ask the Lord to enlighten us, we will soon see the gain or the loss. Don't think that a soul that comes so close to God is allowed to lose Him so quickly, that the devil has an easy task. His Majesty would regret the loss of this soul so much that He gives it in many ways a thousand interior warnings, so that the harm will not be hidden from it.

10. Let this, in sum, be the conclusion: that we strive always to advance. And if we don't advance, let us walk with great fear. Without doubt the devil wants to cause some lapse, for it is not possible that after having come so far, one will fail to grow. Love is never idle, and a failure to grow would be a very

bad sign. A soul that has tried to be the betrothed of God Himself, that is now intimate with His Majesty, and has reached the boundaries that were mentioned, must not go to sleep.

That you, daughters, may see what He does with those He now considers to be His betrothed ones, we shall begin to speak of the sixth dwelling places. And you will see how little it all is that we can do to serve and suffer and accomplish so as to dispose ourselves for such great favors. It could be that our Lord ordained that they command me to write so that we might forget our little earthly joys because we will have our eyes set on the reward and see how immeasurable is His mercy—since He desires to commune with and reveal Himself to some worms—and because we will have these eyes set also on His greatness, and thus run along enkindled in His love.

11. May He be pleased that I manage to explain something about these very difficult things. I know well that this will be impossible if His Majesty and the Holy Spirit do not move my pen. And if what I say will not be for your benefit, I beg Him that I may not succeed in saying anything. His Majesty knows that I have no other desire, insofar as I can understand myself, but that His name be praised and that we strive to serve a Lord who even here on earth pays like this. Through His favors we can understand something of what He will give us in heaven without the intervals, trials, and dangers that there are in this tempestuous sea. If there were no danger of losing or offending Him, it would be easy to endure life until the end of the world so as to labor for so great a God and Lord and Spouse.

May it please His Majesty that we may merit to render Him some service; without as many faults as we always have, even in good works, amen.

THE SIXTH DWELLING PLACES

Contains Eleven Chapters

Chapter 1

Discusses how greater trials come when the Lord begins to grant greater favors. Mentions some and how those who are now in this dwelling place conduct themselves. This chapter is good for souls undergoing interior trials.

WELL THEN, LET US, with the help of the Holy Spirit, speak of the sixth dwelling places, where the soul is now wounded with love for its Spouse and strives for more opportunities to be alone and, in conformity with its state, to rid itself of everything that can be an obstacle to this solitude.

That meeting¹ left such an impression that the soul's whole desire is to enjoy it again. I have already said that in this prayer nothing is seen in a way that can be called seeing, nor is anything seen with the imagination. I use the term "meeting" because of the comparison I made.² Now the soul is fully determined to take no other spouse. But the Spouse does not look at the soul's great desires that the betrothal take place, for He still wants it to desire this more, and He wants the betrothal to take place at a cost; it is the greatest of blessings. And although everything is small when it comes to paying for this exceptional benefit, I tell you, daughters, that for the soul to endure such delay it needs to have that token or pledge of betrothal that it now has. Oh, God help me, what interior and exterior trials the soul suffers before entering the seventh dwelling place!

2. Indeed, sometimes I reflect and fear that if a soul knew beforehand, its natural weakness would find it most difficult to have the determination to suffer and pass through these trials, no matter what blessings were represented to it—unless it had arrived at the seventh dwelling place. For once it has arrived there, the soul fears nothing and is absolutely determined to overcome every obstacle for God.³ And the reason is that it is always so closely joined to His Majesty that from this union comes its fortitude. I believe it will be well to recount some of those trials that I know one will certainly undergo. Perhaps not all souls will be led along this path, although I doubt very much that those persons who sometimes enjoy so truly the things of heaven will live free of earthly trials that come in one way or another.

3. Although I hadn't intended to treat of these, I thought doing so would bring great consolation to some soul going through them, for it would learn that these trials take place in souls to whom God grants similar favors; for truly, when one is suffering the trials, it then seems that everything is lost. I will not deal with them according to the order in which they happen, but as they come to mind. And I want to begin with the smallest trials. There is an outcry by persons a Sister is dealing with and even by those she does not deal with and who, it seems to her, would never even think of her; gossip like the following: "she's trying to make out she's a saint; she goes to extremes to deceive the world and bring others to ruin; there are other better Christians who don't put on all this outward show." (And it's worth noting that she is not putting on any outward show but just striving to fulfill well her state in life.) Those she considered her friends turn away from her, and they are the ones who take the largest and most painful bite at her: "that soul has gone astray and is clearly mistaken; these are things of the devil; she will turn out like this person or that other that went astray, and will bring about a decline in virtue; she has deceived her confessors" (and they go to these confessors, telling them so, giving them examples of what happened to some that were lost in this way); a thousand kinds of ridicule and statements like the above.

4. I know a person who had great fear that there would be no one who would hear her confession because of such gossip⁴—so much gossip that there's no reason to go into it all here. And what is worse these things do not pass quickly, but go on throughout the person's whole life including the advice to others to avoid any dealings with such persons.

You will tell me that there are also those who will speak well of that soul. Oh, daughters, how few there are who believe in such favors in comparison with the many who abhor them! Moreover, praise is just another trial greater than those mentioned! Since the soul sees clearly that if it has anything good this is given by God and is by no means its own—for just previously it saw itself to be very poor and surrounded by great sins—praise is an intolerable burden to it, at least in the beginning. Later on, for certain reasons, praise is not so intolerable. First, because experience makes the soul see clearly that people are as quick to say good things as bad, and so it pays no more attention to the good things than to the bad. Second, because it has been more enlightened by the Lord that no good thing comes from itself but is given by His Majesty; and it turns to praise God, forgetful that it has had any part to play, just as if it had seen the gift in another person. Third, if it sees that some souls have benefited from seeing the favors God grants it, it thinks that His Majesty used this means, of its being falsely esteemed as good, so that some blessings might come to those souls. Fourth, since it looks after the honor and glory of God more than its own, the temptation, which came in the beginning, that these praises will destroy it, is removed; little does dishonor matter to it if in exchange God might perhaps thereby just once be praised—afterward, let whatever comes come.

5. These reasons and others mitigate the great pain these praises cause; although some pain is almost always felt, except when one is paying hardly any attention. But it is an incomparably greater trial to see oneself publicly considered as good without reason than the trials mentioned. And when the soul reaches the stage at which it pays little attention to praise, it pays much less to disapproval; on the contrary, it rejoices in

this and finds it a very sweet music. This is an amazing truth. Blame does not intimidate the soul but strengthens it. Experience has already taught it the wonderful gain that comes through this path. It feels that those who persecute it do not offend God; rather that His Majesty permits persecution for the benefit of the soul. And since it clearly experiences the benefits of persecution, it acquires a special and very tender love for its persecutors. It seems to it that they are greater friends and more advantageous than those who speak well of it.

6. The Lord is wont also to send it the severest illnesses. This is a much greater trial, especially when the pains are acute. For in some way, if these pains are severe, the trial is, it seems to me, the greatest on earth—I mean the greatest exterior trial, however many the other pains. I say “if the pains are severe,” because they then afflict the soul interiorly and exteriorly in such a way that it doesn’t know what to do with itself. It would willingly accept at once any martyrdom rather than these sharp pains; although they do not last long in this extreme form. After all, God gives no more than what can be endured; and His Majesty gives patience first. But other great sufferings and illnesses of many kinds are the usual thing.

7. I know a person who cannot truthfully say that from the time the Lord began forty years ago to grant the favor that was mentioned she spent even one day without pains and other kinds of suffering (from lack of bodily health, I mean) and other great trials.⁵ It’s true that she had been very wretched and that everything seemed small to her in comparison with the hell she deserved. Others, who have not offended our Lord so much, will be led by another path. But I would always choose the path of suffering, if only to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ if there were no other gain; especially, since there are always so many other benefits.

Oh, were we to treat of interior sufferings these others would seem small if the interior ones could be clearly explained; but it is impossible to explain the way in which they come to pass.

8. Let us begin with the torment one meets with from a confessor who is so discreet and has so little experience that there is

nothing he is sure of: he fears everything and finds in everything something to doubt because he sees these unusual experiences. He becomes especially doubtful if he notices some imperfection in a soul that has them, for it seems to such confessors that the ones to whom God grants these favors must be angels—but that is impossible as long as they are in this body. Everything is immediately condemned as from the devil or melancholy. And the world is so full of this melancholy that I am not surprised. There is so much of it now in the world, and the devil causes so many evils through this means, that confessors are very right in fearing it and considering it carefully. But the poor soul that walks with the same fear and goes to its confessor as to its judge, and is condemned by him, cannot help but be deeply tormented and disturbed. Only the one who has passed through this will understand what a great torment it is. For this is another one of the terrible trials these souls suffer, especially if they have lived wretched lives; thinking that because of their sins God will allow them to be deceived. Even though they feel secure and cannot believe that the favor when granted by His Majesty, is from any other spirit than from God, the torment returns immediately since the favor is something that passes quickly, and the remembrance of sins is always present, and the soul sees faults in itself, which are never lacking. When the confessor assures it, the soul grows calm, although the disturbance will return. But when the confessor contributes to the torment with more fear, the trial becomes something almost unbearable—especially when some dryness comes between the times of these favors. It then seems to the soul that it has never been mindful of God and never will be; and when it hears His Majesty spoken of, it seems to it as though it were hearing about a person far away.

9. All this would amount to nothing if it were not for the fact that in addition comes the feeling that it is incapable of explaining things to its confessors, that it has deceived them. And even though it thinks and sees that it tells its confessors about every stirring, even the first ones, this doesn't help. The soul's understanding is so darkened that it becomes incapable of seeing the truth and believes whatever the imagination represents

to it (for the imagination is then its master) or whatever foolish things the devil wants to represent. The Lord, it seems, gives the devil license so that the soul might be tried and even be made to think it is rejected by God. Many are the things that war against it with an interior oppression so keen and unbearable that I don't know what to compare this experience to if not to the oppression of those that suffer in hell, for no consolation is allowed in the midst of this tempest. If they desire to be consoled by their confessor, it seems the devils assist him to torment it more. Thus, when a confessor was dealing with a person after she had suffered this torment (for it seems a dangerous affliction since there are so many things involved in it), he told her to let him know when she was in this state; but the torment was always so bad that he came to realize there was nothing he could do about it.⁶ Well then, if a person in this state who knows how to read well takes up a book in the vernacular, he will find that he understands no more of it than if he didn't know how to read even one of the letters, for the intellect is incapable of understanding.⁷

10. In sum, there is no remedy in this tempest but to wait for the mercy of God. For at an unexpected time, with one word alone or a chance happening, He so quickly calms the storm that it seems there had not been even as much as a cloud in that soul, and it remains filled with sunlight and much more consolation. And like one who has escaped from a dangerous battle and been victorious, it comes out praising our Lord; for it was He who fought for the victory. It knows very clearly that it did not fight, for all the weapons with which it could have defended itself are seen to be, it seems, in the hands of its enemies. Thus, it knows clearly its wretchedness and the very little we of ourselves can do if the Lord abandons us.

11. It seems the soul has no longer any need of reflection to understand this, for the experience of having suffered through it, having seen itself totally incapacitated, made it understand our nothingness and what miserable things we are. For in this state grace is so hidden (even though the soul must not be without grace since with all this torment it doesn't offend God nor would it offend Him for anything on earth) that not even a

very tiny spark is visible. The soul doesn't think that it has any love of God or that it ever had any, for if it has done some good, or His Majesty has granted it some favor, all of this seems to have been dreamed up or fancied. As for sins, it sees certainly that it has committed them.

12. O Jesus, and what a thing it is to see this kind of forsaken soul; and, as I have said,⁸ what little help any earthly consolation is for it! Hence, do not think, Sisters, if at some time you find yourselves in this state, that the rich and those who are free will have a better remedy for these times of suffering. Absolutely not, for being rich in this case seems to me like the situation of a person condemned to die who has all the world's delights placed before him. These delights would not be sufficient to alleviate his suffering; rather, they would increase the torment. So it is with this torment; it comes from above, and earthly things are of no avail in the matter. Our great God wants us to know our own misery and that He is king; and this is very important for what lies ahead.

13. Well then, what will this poor soul do when the torment goes on for many days? If it prays, it feels as though it hasn't prayed—as far as consolation goes, I mean. For consolation is not admitted into the soul's interior, nor is what one recites to oneself, even though vocal, understood. As for mental prayer, this definitely is not the time for that, because the faculties are incapable of the practice; rather, solitude causes greater harm—and also another torment for this soul is that it be with anyone or that others speak to it. And thus however much it forces itself not to do so, it goes about with a gloomy and ill-tempered mien that is externally very noticeable.

Is it true that it will know how to explain its experiences? They are indescribable, for they are spiritual afflictions and sufferings that one cannot name. The best remedy (I don't mean for getting rid of them, because I don't find any, but so that they may be endured) is to engage in external works of charity and to hope in the mercy of God who never fails those who hope in Him. May He be forever blessed, amen.

14. Other exterior trials the devils cause must be quite unusual; and so there's no reason to speak of them. Nor are

they, for the most part, so painful; for, however much the devils do, they do not, in my opinion, manage to disable the faculties or disturb the soul in this way. In sum, there's reason for thinking that they can do no more than what the Lord allows them to do; and provided one doesn't lose one's mind, everything is small in comparison with what was mentioned.

15. We shall be speaking in these dwelling places of other interior sufferings, and dealing with different kinds of prayer and favors from the Lord. For even though some favors cause still more severe suffering than those mentioned, as will be seen from the condition in which the body is left, they do not deserve to be called trials. Nor is there any reason for us to write of them since they are such great favors from the Lord. In the midst of receiving them the soul understands that they are great favors and far beyond its merits. This severe suffering comes so that one may enter the seventh dwelling place. It comes along with many other sufferings, only some of which I shall speak of⁹ because it would be impossible to speak of them all, or even to explain what they are; for they are of a different, much higher level than those mentioned in this chapter. And if I haven't been able to explain any more than I did about those of a lower kind, less will I be able to say of the others. May the Lord give His help for everything through the merits of His Son, amen.

Chapter 2

Deals with some of the ways in which our Lord awakens the soul. It seems there is nothing in these awakenings to fear even though the experience is sublime and the favors are great.

SEEMINGLY WE HAVE LEFT the little dove far behind; but we have not, for these are the trials that make it fly still higher. Well let us begin, then, to discuss the manner in which the Spouse deals with it and how before He belongs to it completely He makes it desire Him vehemently by certain delicate

means the soul itself does not understand. (Nor do I believe I'll be successful in explaining them save to those who have experienced them.) These are impulses so delicate and refined, for they proceed from very deep within the interior part of the soul, that I don't know any comparison that will fit.

2. They are far different from all that we can acquire of ourselves here below and even from the spiritual delights that were mentioned.¹ For often when a person is distracted and forgetful of God, His Majesty will awaken it. His action is as quick as a falling comet. And as clearly as it hears a thunderclap, even though no sound is heard, the soul understands that it was called by God. So well does it understand that sometimes, especially in the beginning, it is made to tremble and even complain without there being anything that causes it pain. It feels that it is wounded in the most exquisite way, but it doesn't learn how or by whom it was wounded. It knows clearly that the wound is something precious, and it would never want to be cured. It complains to its Spouse with words of love, even outwardly, without being able to do otherwise. It knows that He is present, but He doesn't want to reveal the manner in which He allows Himself to be enjoyed. And the pain is great, although delightful and sweet. And even if the soul does not want this wound, the wound cannot be avoided. But the soul, in fact, would never want to be deprived of this pain. The wound satisfies it much more than the delightful and painless absorption of the prayer of quiet.²

3. I am struggling, Sisters, to explain for you this action of love, and I don't know how. For it seems a contradiction that the Beloved would give the soul clear understanding that He is with it and yet make it think that He is calling it by a sign so certain that no room is left for doubt and a whisper so penetrating that the soul cannot help but hear it. For it seems that when the Spouse, who is in the seventh dwelling place, communicates in this manner (for the words are not spoken), all the people in the other dwelling places keep still; neither the senses, nor the imagination, nor the faculties stir.

O my powerful God, how sublime are your secrets, and how different spiritual things are from all that is visible and

understandable here below. There is nothing that serves to explain this favor, even though the favor is a very small one when compared to the very great ones You work in souls.

4. This action of love is so powerful that the soul dissolves with desire, and yet it doesn't know what to ask for since clearly it thinks that its God is with it.

You will ask me: Well, if it knows this, what does it desire or what pains it? What greater good does it want? I don't know. I do know that it seems this pain reaches to the soul's very depths and that when He who wounds it draws out the arrow, it indeed seems, in accord with the deep love the soul feels, that God is drawing these very depths after Him.³ I was thinking now that it's as though, from this fire enkindled in the brazier that is my God, a spark leapt forth and so struck the soul that the flaming fire was felt by it. And since the spark was not enough to set the soul on fire, and the fire is so delightful, the soul is left with that pain; but the spark merely by touching the soul produces that effect. It seems to me this is the best comparison I have come up with. This delightful pain—and it is not pain—is not continuous, although sometimes it lasts a long while; at other times it goes away quickly. This depends on the way the Lord wishes to communicate it, for it is not something that can be procured in any human way. But even though it sometimes lasts for a long while, it comes and goes. To sum up, it is never permanent. For this reason it doesn't set the soul on fire; but just as the fire is about to start, the spark goes out and the soul is left with the desire to suffer again that loving pain the spark causes.

5. Here there is no reason to wonder whether the experience is brought on naturally or caused by melancholy, or whether it is some trick of the devil or some illusion. It is something that leaves clear understanding of how this activity comes from the place where the Lord who is unchanging dwells. The activity is not like that found in other feelings of devotion, where the great absorption in delight can make us doubtful. Here all the senses and faculties remain free of any absorption, wondering what this could be, without hindering anything or being able, in my opinion, to increase or take away that delightful pain.

Anyone to whom our Lord may have granted this favor—for if He has, that fact will be recognized on reading this—should thank Him very much. Such a person doesn't have to fear deception. Let his great fear be that he might prove ungrateful for so generous a favor, and let him strive to better his entire life, and to serve, and he will see the results and how he receives more and more. In fact, I know a person⁴ who received this favor for some years and was so pleased with it that had she served the Lord through severe trials for a great number of years she would have felt well repaid by it. May He be blessed forever, amen.

6. You may wonder why greater security is present in this favor than in other things. In my opinion, these are the reasons: First, the devil never gives delightful pain like this. He can give the savor and delight that seem to be spiritual, but he doesn't have the power to join pain—and so much of it—to the spiritual quiet and delight of the soul. For all of his powers are on the outside, and the pains he causes are never, in my opinion, delightful or peaceful, but disturbing and contentious. Second, this delightful tempest comes from a region other than those regions of which he can be lord. Third, the favor brings wonderful benefits to the soul, the more customary of which are the determination to suffer for God, the desire to have many trials, and the determination to withdraw from earthly satisfactions and conversations and other similar things.

7. That this favor is no fancy is very clear. Although at other times the soul may strive to experience this favor, it will not be able to counterfeit one. And the favor is something so manifest that it can in no way be fancied. I mean, one cannot think it is imagined, when it is not, or have doubts about it. If some doubt should remain, one must realize that the things experienced are not true impulses; I mean if there should be doubt about whether the favor was experienced or not. The favor is felt as clearly as a loud voice is heard. There's no basis for thinking it is caused by melancholy, because melancholy does not produce or fabricate its fancies save in the imagination. This favor proceeds from the interior part of the soul.

Now it could be that I'm mistaken, but until I hear other

reasons from someone who understands the experience I will always have this opinion. And so I know a person who was quite fearful about being deceived but who never had any fear of this prayer.⁵

8. The Lord also has other ways of awakening the soul: unexpectedly, when it is praying vocally and not thinking of anything interior, it seems a delightful enkindling will come upon it as though a fragrance were suddenly to become so powerful as to spread through all the senses. (I don't say that it is a fragrance but am merely making this comparison.) Or the experience is something like this, and it is communicated only for the sake of making one feel the Spouse's presence there. The soul is moved with a delightful desire to enjoy Him, and thereby it is prepared to make intense acts of love and praise of our Lord. This favor rises out of that place I mentioned;⁶ but there is nothing in it that causes pain, nor are the desires themselves to enjoy God painful. Such is the way the soul usually experiences it. Neither does it seem to me, for some of the reasons mentioned,⁷ there is anything to fear; but one should try to receive this favor with gratitude.

Chapter 3

Deals with the same subject and tells of the manner in which God, when pleased, speaks to the soul. Gives counsel about how one should behave in such a matter and not follow one's own opinion. Sets down some signs for discerning when there is deception and when not. This chapter is very beneficial.¹

GOD HAS ANOTHER WAY of awakening the soul. Although it somehow seems to be a greater favor than those mentioned,² it can be more dangerous, and therefore I shall pause a little to consider it. There are many kinds of locutions given to the soul. Some seem to come from outside oneself; others, from deep within the interior part of the soul; others, from the superior part; and some are so exterior that they come

through the sense of hearing, for it seems there is a spoken word. Sometimes, and often, the locution can be an illusion, especially in persons with a weak imagination or in those who are melancholic, I mean who suffer noticeably from melancholy.

2. In my opinion no attention should be paid to these latter two kinds of persons even if they say they see and hear and understand. But neither should one disturb these persons by telling them their locutions come from the devil; one must listen to them as to sick persons. The prioress or confessor to whom they relate their locutions should tell them to pay no attention to such experiences, that these locutions are not essential to the service of God, and that the devil has deceived many by such means, even though this particular person, perhaps, may not be suffering such deception. This counsel should be given so as not to aggravate the melancholy, for if they tell her the locution is due to melancholy, there will be no end to the matter; she will swear that she sees and hears, for it seems to her that she does.

3. It is true that it's necessary to be firm in taking prayer away from her and to insist strongly that she pay no attention to locutions; for the devil is wont to profit from these souls that are sick in this way, even though what he does may not be to their harm but to the harm of others. But for both the sick and the healthy there is always reason to fear these things until the spirit of such persons is well understood. And I say that in the beginning it is always better to free these persons from such experiences, for if the locutions are from God, doing so is a greater help toward progress, and a person even grows when tested. This is true; nonetheless, one should not proceed in a way that is distressing or disturbing to a soul, because truly the soul can't help it if these locutions come.

4. Now then, to return to what I was saying about locutions, all the kinds I mentioned³ can be from God or from the devil or from one's own imagination. If I can manage to do so, I shall give, with the help of the Lord, the signs as to when they come from these different sources and when they are dangerous; for there are many souls among prayerful people who hear them.

My desire, Sisters, is that you realize you are doing the right thing if you refuse to give credence to them, even when they are destined just for you (such as, some consolation, or advice about your faults), no matter who tells you about them, or if they are an illusion, for it doesn't matter where they come from. One thing I advise you: do not think, even if the locutions are from God, that you are better because of them, for He spoke frequently with the Pharisees. All the good comes from how one benefits by these words; and pay no more attention to those that are not in close conformity with Scripture than you would to those heard from the devil himself. Even if they come from your weak imagination, it's necessary to treat them as if they were temptations in matters of faith, and thus resist them always. They will then go away because they will have little effect on you.

5. Returning, then, to the first of the different kinds of locutions; whether or not the words come from the interior part of the soul, from the superior part, or from the exterior part doesn't matter in discerning whether or not they are from God. The surest signs they are from God that can be had, in my opinion, are these: the first and truest is the power and authority they bear, for locutions from God effect what they say. Let me explain myself better. A soul finds itself in the midst of all the tribulation and disturbance that was mentioned,⁴ in darkness of the intellect and in dryness; with one word alone of these locutions from the Lord ("don't be distressed"), it is left calm and free from all distress, with great light, and without all that suffering in which it seemed to it that all the learned men and all who might come together to give it reasons for not being distressed would be unable to remove its affliction no matter how hard they tried. Or, it is afflicted because its confessor and others have told it that its spirit is from the devil, and it is all full of fear; with one word alone ("it is I, fear not"), the fear is taken away completely, and the soul is most comforted, thinking that nothing would be sufficient to make it believe anything else. Or, it is greatly distressed over how certain serious business matters will turn out; it hears that it should be calm, that everything will turn

out all right. It is left certain and free of anxiety. And this is the way in many other instances.⁵

6. The second sign is the great quiet left in the soul, the devout and peaceful recollection, the readiness to engage in the praises of God. O Lord, if a word sent to be spoken through one of Your attendants (for the Lord Himself does not speak the words—at least not in this dwelling place—but an angel) has such power, what will be the power You leave in the soul that is attached to You, and You to it, through love?

7. The third sign is that these words remain in the memory for a very long time, and some are never forgotten, as are those we listen to here on earth—I mean those we hear from men. For even if the words are spoken by men who are very important and learned, or concern the future, we do not have them engraved on our memory, or believe them, as we do these. The certitude is so strong that even in things that in one's own opinion sometimes seem impossible and in which there is doubt as to whether they will or will not happen, and the intellect wavers, there is an assurance in the soul itself that cannot be overcome. Even though it seems that everything is going contrary to what the soul understood, and years go by, the thought remains that God will find other means than those men know of and that in the end the words will be accomplished; and so they are. Although, as I say, the soul still suffers when it sees the many delays, for since time has passed since it heard the words, and the effects and the certitude that were present about their being from God have passed, these doubts take place. The soul wonders whether the locutions might have come from the devil or from the imagination. Yet, none of these doubts remain in the soul, but it would at present die a thousand deaths for that truth. But, as I say, what won't the devil do with all these imaginings so as to afflict and intimidate the soul, especially if the words regard a business matter which when carried out will bring many blessings to souls, and works that will bring great honor and service to God, and if there is great difficulty involved? At least he weakens faith, for it does great harm not to believe that God has the power to do things that our intellects do not understand.

8. Despite all these struggles and even the persons who tell one that the locutions are foolishness (I mean the confessors with whom one speaks about these things), and despite the many unfortunate occurrences that make it seem the words will not be fulfilled, there remains a spark of assurance so alive—I don't know from where—that the words will be fulfilled, though all other hopes are dead, that even should the soul desire otherwise, that spark will stay alive. And in the end, as I have said,⁶ the words of the Lord are fulfilled. And the soul is so consoled and happy it wouldn't want to do anything but always praise His Majesty, and praise Him more for the fact that what He had told it was fulfilled than for the work itself, no matter how important the work is to the soul.

9. I don't know why it is so important to the soul that these words turn out to be true, for if that soul were itself caught in some lies, I don't think it would regret the fact as much. And yet, there is nothing else it can do, for it merely says what it hears. Countless times, in this regard, a certain person thought of how the prophet Jonah feared that Nineveh would not be destroyed.⁷ In sum, since the spirit is from God, it is right that the soul be faithful in its desire that the words be considered true, for God is the supreme truth. And so its happiness is great when through a thousand roundabout ways and in most difficult circumstances it sees them fulfilled. Even though great trials should come to the person herself from them, she would rather suffer such trials than the trial of seeing that what she knows for certain the Lord told her fails in fact to happen. Perhaps not all persons will have this weakness—if it is a weakness, for I cannot condemn it as bad.

10. If the locutions come from the imagination, there are none of these signs; neither certitude, nor peace, nor interior delight. But it could happen—and I even know some persons to whom it has happened—that while these imaginings come a person may be very absorbed in the prayer of quiet and spiritual sleep. Some have such a weak constitution and imagination, or I don't know the cause, that indeed in this deep recollection they are so outside themselves (for they don't feel anything exteriorly and all the senses are put to sleep) that they

think as when they are asleep and dreaming (and perhaps it is true that they are asleep) that these locutions are spoken to them and even that they see things. And they think these things are from God, but in the end the effects are like those of sleep. It can also happen that while with affection they are begging our Lord for something, they think the locution is telling them what they want to hear; this sometimes happens. But anyone who has had much experience of God's locutions will not be deceived by these that come, in my opinion, from the imagination.

11. With those locutions coming from the devil there is more to fear. But if the signs mentioned⁸ are present, there can be a great deal of certainty that the locutions are from God. But the certainty shouldn't be so strong that if the locution concerns something serious about oneself and has to be carried out in deed, or business affairs involving third parties, anything should ever be done or pass through one's mind without the opinion of a learned and prudent confessor and servant of God. This is so even if the soul increasingly understands and thinks the locution is clearly from God. His Majesty wants the soul to consult in this way; and that it does so does not mean it is failing to carry out the Lord's commands, for He has told us, where the words are undoubtedly His, to hold the confessor in His place.⁹ And these words of His help to give courage if the task is a difficult one, and our Lord when He so desires will make the confessor believe that the locution comes from His spirit. If He doesn't, the confessor and the soul are no longer under obligation. To do otherwise and follow nothing but your own opinion in this, I hold to be very dangerous. And so, Sisters, I warn you, on the part of our Lord, that you never let this happen to you.

12. There is another way in which the Lord speaks to the soul—for I hold that it is very definitely from Him—with a certain intellectual vision, the nature of which I will explain further on.¹⁰ The locution takes place in such intimate depths and a person with the ears of the soul seems to hear those words from the Lord Himself so clearly and so in secret that this very way in which they are heard, together with the acts that the vi-

sion itself produces, assures that person and gives him certitude that the devil can have no part to play in the locution. Wonderful effects are left so that the soul may believe; at least there is assurance that the locution doesn't come from the imagination. Furthermore, if the soul is attentive, it can always have assurance for the following reasons: First, there is a difference because of the clarity of the locution. It is so clear that the soul remembers every syllable and whether it is said in one style or another, even if it is a whole sentence. But in a locution fancied by the imagination the words will not be so clear or distinct but like something half-dreamed.

13. Second, in these locutions one often is not thinking about what is heard (I mean that the locution comes unexpectedly and even sometimes while one is in conversation), although many times it is a response to what passes quickly through the mind or to what did so previously. But it often refers to things about the future that never entered the mind, and so the imagination couldn't have fabricated it in such a way that the soul could be deceived in fancying what was not desired or wanted or thought of.

14. Third, the one locution comes as in the case of a person who hears, and that of the imagination comes as in the case of a person who gradually composes what he himself wants to be told.

15. Fourth, the words are very different, and with one of them much is comprehended. Our intellect could not compose them so quickly.

16. Fifth, together with the words, in a way I wouldn't know how to explain, there is often given much more to understand than is ever dreamed possible without words.

I shall speak more about this mode of understanding elsewhere,¹¹ for it is something very delicate and to the praise of our Lord. For in regard to these different kinds of locutions, there have been persons who were very doubtful and unable to understand themselves. A certain person, especially, experienced this doubt,¹² and so there will be others. And thus I know that she observed the differences with close attention

because the Lord has often granted her this favor, and the greatest doubt she had in the beginning was whether she had imagined the locution. That the words come from the devil can be more quickly understood; even though his wiles are so many, for he knows well how to counterfeit the Spirit of light. In my opinion the devil will say the words very clearly so that there will be certitude about their meaning, as is so with those coming from the Spirit of truth. But he will not be able to counterfeit the effects that were mentioned¹³ or leave this peace or light in the soul; on the contrary he leaves restlessness and disturbance. But he can do little harm or none if the soul is humble and does what I have mentioned,¹⁴ that is, doesn't make a move to do a thing of what it hears.

17. If the locutions contain words of favor and consolation from the Lord, let the soul look attentively to see if it thinks that because of them it is better than others. The more it hears words of favor the more humble it should be left; if it isn't, let it believe that the spirit is not from God. One thing very certain is that when the spirit is from God the soul esteems itself less, the greater the favor granted, and it has more awareness of its sins and is more forgetful of its own gain, and its will and memory are employed more in seeking only the honor of God, nor does it think about its own profit, and it walks with greater fear lest its will deviate in anything, and with greater certitude that it never deserved any of those favors but deserved hell. Since all the favors and things it experienced in prayer produce these effects, the soul does not walk fearfully but with confidence in the mercy of the Lord, who is faithful¹⁵ and will not let the devil deceive it; although walking with fear is always good.

18. It could be that those whom the Lord does not lead along this path think such souls could refuse to listen to these words spoken to them—and if the words are interior distract themselves in such a way that they not be admitted—and as a result go about free of these dangers.

To this, I reply that it is impossible. I'm not speaking of imaginary locutions, for by not being so desirous of a thing or wanting to pay attention to their imaginings souls have a

remedy. In locutions from the Lord, they have none. For the very spirit that speaks puts a stop to all other thoughts and makes the soul attend to what is said. It does this in such a way that I think, and I believe truly, that somehow it would be more possible for a person with very good hearing not to hear someone else speaking in a loud voice. In this latter instance the person would be able to turn his attention away and center his mind and intellect on something else. But in the locution we are speaking about this cannot be done; there are no ears to stop, nor is there the power to think of anything but what is said to the soul. For He who was able to stop the sun (through Joshua's prayer, I believe)¹⁶ can make the faculties and the whole interior stop in such a way that the soul sees clearly that another greater Lord than itself governs that castle. And this brings it deep devotion and humility. So there's no remedy for this kind of locution. May the divine Majesty provide a remedy that will enable us to place our eyes only on pleasing Him and to be forgetful of ourselves, as I said, amen.

Please God that I may have succeeded in explaining what I set out to; may it be helpful for whoever has had such experience.

Chapter 4

Treats of when God suspends the soul in prayer with rapture or ecstasy or transport, which are all the same in my opinion,¹ and how great courage is necessary to receive sublime favors from His Majesty.

WITH THESE TRIALS and the other things that were mentioned, what kind of calm can the poor little butterfly have? All these sufferings are meant to increase one's desire to enjoy the Spouse. And His Majesty, as one who knows our weakness, is enabling the soul through these afflictions and many others to have the courage to be joined with so great a Lord and to take Him as its Spouse.²

2. You will laugh at my saying this and will think it's

foolishness; it will seem to any one of you that such courage is unnecessary and that there's no woman so miserable who wouldn't have the courage to be married to the king. I believe this is true with respect to kings here on earth; but with respect to the King of heaven, I tell you there is need for more courage than you think. Our nature is very timid and lowly when it comes to something so great, and I am certain that if God were not to give the courage, no matter how much you might see that the favor is good for us, it would be impossible for you to receive that favor. And thus you will see what His Majesty does to conclude this betrothal, which I understand comes about when He gives the soul raptures that draw it out of its senses. For if it were to see itself so near this great majesty while in its senses, it would perhaps die. Let it be understood that I mean true raptures and not the weaknesses women experience here below, for everything seems to us to be a rapture or an ecstasy. And, as I believe I have said,³ some have constitutions so weak that the prayer of quiet is enough to make them die.

I want to put down here some kinds of rapture that I've come to understand because I've discussed them with so many spiritual persons. But I don't know whether I shall succeed as I did when I wrote elsewhere about them⁴ and other things that occur in this dwelling place. On account of certain reasons it seems worthwhile to speak of these kinds of rapture again, and, if for no other reason, so that everything related to these dwelling places will be put down here together.

3. One kind of rapture is that in which the soul even though not in prayer is touched by some word it remembers or hears about God. It seems that His Majesty from the interior of the soul makes the spark we mentioned⁵ increase, for He is moved with compassion in seeing the soul suffer so long a time from its desire. All burnt up, the soul is renewed like the phoenix, and one can devoutly believe that its faults are pardoned. Now that it is so pure, the Lord joins it with Himself, without anyone understanding what is happening except these two; nor does the soul itself understand in a way that can afterward be explained. Yet, it does have interior understanding, for this ex-

perience is not like that of fainting or convulsion; in these latter nothing is understood inwardly or outwardly.

4. What I know in this case is that the soul was never so awake to the things of God nor did it have such deep enlightenment and knowledge of His Majesty. This will seem impossible, for if the faculties are so absorbed that we can say they are dead, and likewise the senses, how can a soul know that it understands this secret? I don't know, nor perhaps does any creature but only the Creator. And this goes for many other things that take place in this state — I mean in these two dwelling places, for there is no closed door between the one and the other. Because there are things in the last that are not revealed to those who have not yet reached it, I thought I should divide them.

5. When the soul is in this suspension, the Lord likes to show it some secrets, things about heaven, and imaginative visions. It is able to tell of them afterward, for these remain so impressed on the memory that they are never forgotten. But when the visions are intellectual, the soul doesn't know how to speak of them. For there must be some visions during these moments that are so sublime that it's not fitting for those who live on this earth to have the further understanding necessary to explain them. However, when the soul is again in possession of its senses, it can say many things about these intellectual visions.

It could be that some of you do not know what a vision is, especially an intellectual one. I shall explain at the proper time,⁶ for one who has the authority ordered me to do so.⁷ And although the explanation may not seem pertinent, it will perhaps benefit some souls.

6. Well now you will ask me: if afterward there is to be no remembrance of these sublime favors granted by the Lord to the soul in this state, what benefit do they have? Oh, daughters, they are so great one cannot exaggerate! For even though they are unexplainable, they are well inscribed in the very interior part of the soul and are never forgotten.

But, you will insist, if there is no image and the faculties do not understand, how can the visions be remembered? I don't

understand this either; but I do understand that some truths about the grandeur of God remain so fixed in this soul, that even if faith were not to tell it who God is and of its obligation to believe that He is God, from that very moment it would adore Him as God, as did Jacob when he saw the ladder. By means of the ladder Jacob must have understood other secrets that he didn't know how to explain, for by seeing just a ladder on which angels descended and ascended he would not have understood such great mysteries if there had not been deeper interior enlightenment.⁸ I don't know if I'm guessing right in what I say, for although I have heard this story about Jacob, I don't know if I'm remembering it correctly.

7. Nor did Moses know how to describe all that he saw in the bush, but only what God wished him to describe.⁹ But if God had not shown secrets to his soul along with a certitude that made him recognize and believe that they were from God, Moses could not have entered into so many severe trials. But he must have understood such deep things among the thorns of that bush that the vision gave him the courage to do what he did for the people of Israel. So, Sisters, we don't have to look for reasons to understand the hidden things of God. Since we believe He is powerful, clearly we must believe that a worm with as limited a power as ours will not understand His grandeurs. Let us praise Him, for He is pleased that we come to know some of them.

8. I have been wanting to find some comparison by which to explain what I'm speaking about, and I don't think there is any that fits. But let's use this one: you enter into the room of a king or great lord, or I believe they call it the treasure chamber, where there are countless kinds of glass and earthen vessels and other things so arranged that almost all these objects are seen upon entering. Once I was brought to a room like this in the house of the Duchess of Alba where, while I was on a journey, obedience ordered me to stay because of this lady's insistence with my superiors.¹⁰ I was amazed on entering and wondered what benefit could be gained from that conglomeration of things, and I saw that one could praise the Lord at seeing so many different kinds of objects, and now I laugh to

myself upon realizing how the experience has helped me here in my explanation. Although I was in that room for a while, there was so much there to see that I soon forgot it all; none of those pieces has remained in my memory any more than if I had never seen them, nor would I know how to explain the workmanship of any of them. I can only say in general that I remember seeing everything. Likewise with this favor, the soul, while it is made one with God, is placed in this room of the empyreal heaven that we must have interiorly. For clearly, the soul has some of these dwelling places since God abides within it. And although the Lord must not want the soul to see these secrets every time it is in this ecstasy, for it can be so absorbed in enjoying Him that a sublime good like that is sufficient for it, sometimes He is pleased that the absorption decrease and the soul see at once what is in that room. After it returns to itself, the soul is left with that representation of the grandeurs it saw; but it cannot describe any of them, nor do its natural powers attain to any more than what God wished that it see supernaturally.

9. You, therefore, might object that I admit that the soul sees and that the vision is an imaginative one. But I'm not saying that, for I'm not dealing with an imaginative vision but with an intellectual one. Since I have no learning, I don't know how in my dullness to explain anything. If what I have said up to now about this prayer is worthwhile, I know clearly that I'm not the one who has said it.

I hold that if at times in its raptures the soul doesn't understand these secrets, its raptures are not given by God but caused by some natural weakness. It can happen to persons with a weak constitution, as is so with women, that any spiritual force will overcome the natural powers, and the soul will be absorbed as I believe I mentioned in reference to the prayer of quiet.¹¹ These experiences have nothing to do with rapture. In a rapture, believe me, God carries off for Himself the entire soul, and, as to someone who is His own and His spouse, He begins showing it some little part of the kingdom that it has gained by being espoused to Him. However small that part of His kingdom may be, everything that there is in this great God is magnificent. And He doesn't want any hindrance from

anyone, neither from the faculties nor from the senses, but He immediately commands the doors of all these dwelling places to be closed; and only that door to His dwelling place remains open so that we can enter. Blessed be so much mercy; they will be rightly cursed who have not wanted to benefit by it and who have lost this Lord.

10. Oh, my Sisters, what nothingness it is, that which we leave! Nor is what we do anything, nor all that we could do for a God who thus wishes to communicate Himself to a worm! And if we hope to enjoy this blessing even in this present life, what are we doing? What is causing us to delay? What is enough to make us, even momentarily, stop looking for this Lord as the bride looked for Him in the streets and in the squares?¹² Oh, what a mockery everything in the world is if it doesn't lead us and help us toward this blessing even if its delights and riches and joys, as much of them as imaginable, were to last forever! It is all loathsome dung compared to these treasures that will be enjoyed without end. Nor are these anything in comparison with having as our own the Lord of all the treasures of heaven and earth.

11. Oh, human blindness! How long, how long before this dust will be removed from our eyes! Even though among ourselves the dust doesn't seem to be capable of blinding us completely, I see some specks, some tiny pebbles that if we allow them to increase will be enough to do us great harm. On the contrary, for the love of God, Sisters, let us benefit by these faults so as to know our misery, and they will give us clearer vision as did the mud to the blind man cured by our Spouse.¹³ Thus, seeing ourselves so imperfect, let us increase our supplications that His Majesty may draw good out of our miseries so that we might be pleasing to Him.

12. I have digressed a great deal without realizing it. Pardon me, Sisters, and believe me that having reached these grandeurs of God (I mean, reached the place where I must speak of them), I cannot help but feel very sorry to see what we lose through our own fault. Even though it is true that these are blessings the Lord gives to whomever He wills, His Majesty would give them all to us if we loved Him as He loves us. He

doesn't desire anything else than to have those to whom to give. His riches do not lessen when He gives them away.

13. Well now, to get back to what I was saying,¹⁴ the Spouse commands that the doors of the dwelling places be closed and even those of the castle and the outer wall. For in desiring to carry off this soul, He takes away the breath so that, even though the other senses sometimes last a little longer, a person cannot speak at all; although at other times everything is taken away at once, and the hands and the body grow cold so that the person doesn't seem to have any life; nor sometimes is it known whether he is breathing. This situation lasts but a short while, I mean in its intensity; for when this extreme suspension lets up a little, it seems that the body returns to itself somewhat and is nourished so as to die again and give more life to the soul. Nevertheless so extreme an ecstasy doesn't last long.

14. But it will happen that even though the extreme ecstasy ends, the will remains so absorbed and the intellect so withdrawn, for a day and even days, that the latter seems incapable of understanding anything that doesn't lead to awakening the will to love; and the will is wide awake to this love and asleep to becoming attached to any creature.

15. Oh, when the soul returns completely to itself, what bewilderment and how intense its desires to be occupied in God in every kind of way He might want! If the effects that were mentioned were produced by the former kinds of prayer what will be the effects of a favor as sublime as this? The soul would desire to have a thousand lives so as to employ them all for God and that everything here on earth would be a tongue to help it praise Him. The desires to do penance are most strong, but not much help comes from performing it, because the strength of love makes the soul feel that all that is done amounts to little and see clearly that the martyrs did not accomplish much in suffering the torments they did because with this help from our Lord, such suffering is easy. Hence these souls complain to His Majesty when no opportunity for suffering presents itself.

16. When this favor is granted them in secret, their esteem for it is great; when it is given in the presence of other persons,

their embarrassment and shame are so strong that the pain and worry over what those who saw it will think somehow take the soul away from what was being enjoyed.¹⁵ For these persons know the malice of the world, and they understand that the world will not perhaps regard the experience for what it is, but that what the Lord should be praised for will perhaps be the occasion for rash judgments. In some ways it seems to me that this pain and embarrassment amount to a lack of humility, for if this person desires to be reviled, what difference does it make what others think? But the soul cannot control such feelings. One who was in this affliction heard from the Lord: “Don’t be afflicted, either they will praise Me or criticize you; and in either case you gain.”¹⁶ I learned afterward that this person was very much consoled and encouraged by these words, and I put them down here in case one of you might find herself in this affliction. It seems that our Lord wishes all to understand that that soul is now His, that no one should touch it. Well and good if its body, or honor, or possessions are touched for this soul draws honor for His Majesty out of everything. But that one touch the soul—absolutely not; for if the soul does not withdraw from its Spouse through a very culpable boldness, He will protect it from the whole world and even from all hell.

17. I don’t know if anything has been explained about the nature of rapture, for to explain it is completely impossible, as I have said.¹⁷ But I don’t believe anything has been lost by trying. For there are effects that are very different in feigned raptures. I do not say “feigned” because the one who has the experience wants to deceive but because that person is deceived. And since the signs and effects of the feigned raptures are not in conformity with such a great blessing, the true rapture is looked upon unfavorably; and afterward the one to whom the Lord grants it, justifiably is not believed. May He be blessed and praised forever, amen, amen.

Chapter 5

Continues on the same subject and deals with a kind of rapture in which God raises up the soul through a flight of the spirit, an experience different from that just explained. Tells why courage is necessary. Explains something about this delightful favor the Lord grants. The chapter is a very beneficial one.

THERE IS ANOTHER KIND of rapture — I call it flight of the spirit — which, though substantially the same as other raptures, is interiorly experienced very differently.¹ For sometimes suddenly a movement of the soul is felt so swift that it seems the spirit is carried off, and at a fearful speed especially in the beginning. This is why I have told you² that strong courage is necessary for the one to whom God grants these favors, and even faith and confidence and a full surrender to our Lord so that He may do what He wants with the soul. Do you think it is a small disturbance for a person to be very much in his senses and see his soul carried off (and in the case of some, we have read, even the body with the soul) without knowing where that soul is going, what or who does this, or how? At the beginning of this swift movement there is not so much certitude that the rapture is from God.³

2. Well, now, is there some means by which one can resist it? None at all; rather, to resist makes matters worse, for I know this was so with a certain person.⁴ It seems God wishes that the soul that has so often, so earnestly, and with such complete willingness offered everything to Him should understand that in itself it no longer has any part to play; and it is carried off with a noticeably more impetuous movement. It is determined now to do no more than what the straw does when drawn by the amber — if you have noticed — and abandon itself into the hands of the One who is all powerful, for it sees that the safest thing to do is to make a virtue of necessity. And that I

mentioned a straw is certainly appropriate, for as easily as a huge giant snatches up a straw, this great and powerful Giant of ours carries away the spirit.⁵

3. It seems the trough of water we mentioned (I believe it was in the fourth dwelling place, for I don't recall exactly)⁶ filled so easily and gently, I mean without any movement. Here this great God, who holds back the springs of water and doesn't allow the sea to go beyond its boundaries,⁷ lets loose the springs from which the water in this trough flows. With a powerful impulse, a huge wave rises up so forcefully that it lifts high this little bark that is our soul. A bark cannot prevent the furious waves from leaving it where they will; nor does the pilot have the power, nor do those who take part in controlling the little ship. So much less can the interior part of the soul stay where it will, or make its senses or faculties do other than what they are commanded; here the soul doesn't care what happens in the exterior senses.

4. It is certain, Sisters, that just from writing about it I am amazed at how the immense power of this great King and Emperor is shown here. What will be the amazement of the one who experiences it! I hold that if His Majesty were to reveal this power to those who go astray in the world as He does to these souls, the former would not dare offend Him; this out of fear if not out of love. Oh, how obliged, then, will those persons be who have been informed through so sublime a path to strive with all their might not to displease this Lord! For love of Him, Sisters, I beg you, those of you to whom His Majesty has granted these favors, or others like them, that you don't grow careless and do nothing but receive. Reflect that the one who owes a lot must pay a lot.⁸

5. In this respect, too, great courage is necessary, for this favor is something frightening. If our Lord were not to give such courage, the soul would always go about deeply distressed. For it reflects on what His Majesty does for it and turns back to look at itself, at how little it serves in comparison with its obligation, and at how the tiny bit it does is full of faults, failures, and weaknesses. So as not to recall how imperfectly it

performs some work — if it does — it prefers striving to forget its works, keeping in mind its sins, and placing itself before the mercy of God. Since it doesn't have anything with which to pay, it begs for the pity and mercy God has always had toward sinners.

6. Perhaps He will respond as He did to a person who before a crucifix was reflecting with deep affliction that she had never had anything to give to God, or anything to give up for Him. The Crucified, Himself, in consoling her told her He had given her all the sufferings and trials He had undergone in His Passion so that she could have them as her own to offer His Father.⁹ The comfort and enrichment was such that, according to what I have heard from her, she cannot forget the experience. Rather, every time she sees how miserable she is, she gets encouragement and consolation from remembering those words.

I could mention here some other experiences like this, for since I have dealt with so many holy and prayerful persons, I know about many such experiences; but I want to limit myself lest you think I am speaking of myself. What I said seems to me very beneficial to help you understand how pleased our Lord is that we know ourselves and strive to reflect again and again on our poverty and misery and on how we possess nothing that we have not received. So, my Sisters, courage is necessary for this knowledge and for the many other graces given to the soul the Lord has brought to this stage. And when there is humility, courage, in my opinion, is even more necessary for this knowledge of one's own misery. May the Lord give us this humility because of who He is.

7. Well, now, to return to this quick rapture of the spirit.¹⁰ It is such that the spirit truly seems to go forth from the body. On the other hand, it is clear that this person is not dead; at least, he cannot say whether for some moments he was in the body or not. It seems to him that he was entirely in another region different from this in which we live, where there is shown another light so different from earth's light that if he were to spend his whole life trying to imagine that light, along with the other things, he would be unable to do so. It happens

that within an instant so many things together are taught him that if he were to work for many years with his imagination and mind in order to systematize them he wouldn't be able to do so, not with even one thousandth part of one of them. This is not an intellectual but an imaginative vision, for the eyes of the soul see much better than do we with bodily eyes here on earth, and without words understanding of some things is given; I mean that if a person sees some saints, he knows them as well as if he had often spoken with them.

8. At other times, along with the things seen through the eyes of the soul by an intellectual vision, other things are represented, especially a multitude of angels with their Lord. And without seeing anything with the eyes of the body or the soul, through an admirable knowledge I will not be able to explain, there is represented what I'm saying and many other things not meant to be spoken of. Anyone who experiences them, and has more ability than I, will perhaps know how to explain them; although doing so seems to me very difficult indeed. Whether all this takes place in the body or not, I wouldn't know; at least I wouldn't swear that the soul is in the body or that the body is without the soul.¹¹

9. I have often thought that just as the sun while in the sky has such strong rays that, even though it doesn't move from there, the rays promptly reach the earth, so the soul and the spirit, which are one,¹² could be like the sun and its rays. Thus, while the soul remains in its place, the superior part rises above it. In a word, I don't know what I'm saying. What is true, is that with the speed of a ball shot from an arquebus, when fire is applied, an interior flight is experienced—I don't know what else to call it—which, though noiseless, is so clearly a movement that it cannot be the work of the imagination. And while the spirit is far outside itself, from all it can understand, great things are shown to it. When it again senses that it is within itself, the benefits it feels are remarkable, and it has so little esteem for all earthly things in comparison to the things it has seen that the former seem like dung. From then on its life on earth is very painful, and it doesn't see anything good in those things that used to seem good to it. The experience causes it to

care little about them. It seems the Lord, like those Israelites who brought back signs from the promised land,¹³ has desired to show it something about its future land so that it may suffer the trials of this laborious path, knowing where it must go to get its final rest. Even though something that passes so quickly will not seem to you very beneficial, the blessings left in the soul are so great that only the person who has this experience will be able to understand its value.

10. Wherefore, the experience, obviously, is not from the devil; it would be impossible for the imagination or the devil to represent things that leave so much virtue, peace, calm, and improvement in the soul. Three things, especially, are left in it to a very sublime degree: knowledge of the grandeur of God, because the more we see in this grandeur the greater is our understanding; self-knowledge and humility upon seeing that something so low in comparison with the Creator of so many grandeurs dared to offend Him (and neither does the soul dare look up at Him); the third, little esteem of earthly things save for those that can be used for the service of so great a God.

11. These are the jewels the Spouse begins to give the betrothed, and their value is such that the soul will not want to lose them. For these meetings¹⁴ remain so engraved in the memory that I believe it's impossible to forget them until one enjoys them forever, unless they are forgotten through one's own most serious fault. But the Spouse who gives them has the power to give the grace not to lose them.

12. Well to get back to the courage that is necessary,¹⁵ does it seem to you that this is so trivial a thing? For it truly seems that because the soul loses its senses, and doesn't understand why, that it is separated from the body. It's necessary that He who gives everything else give the courage also. You will say that this fear is well paid. So do I. May it please His Majesty to give us the courage so that we may merit to serve Him, amen.

Chapter 6

Tells about an effect of the prayer discussed in the previous chapter. How to understand whether this effect is true rather than deceptive. Discusses another favor the Lord grants so that the soul might be occupied in praising Him.

AS A RESULT of these wonderful favors the soul is left so full of longings to enjoy completely the One who grants them that it lives in a great though delightful torment. With the strongest yearnings to die, and thus usually with tears, it begs God to take it from this exile. Everything it sees wearies it. When it is alone it finds some relief, but soon this torment returns; yet when the soul does not experience this pain, something is felt to be missing. In sum, this little butterfly is unable to find a lasting place of rest; rather, since the soul goes about with such tender love, any occasion that enkindles this fire more makes the soul fly aloft. As a result, in this dwelling place the raptures are very common and there is no means to avoid them even though they may take place in public. Hence, persecutions and criticism. Even though the soul may want to be free from fears, others do not allow this freedom. For there are many persons who cause these fears, especially confessors.

2. And even though, on the one hand, the soul seems to feel very secure in its interior part, especially when it is alone with God, on the other hand, it goes about in deep distress because it fears the devil may in some way beguile it into offending the One whom it loves so much. Little does it suffer over criticism, unless the confessor himself distresses it, as if it could do more. It does nothing but ask prayers from all and beg His Majesty to lead it by another path, for they all tell it to take another; they say that the path it is on is very dangerous. But since the soul has found this path to be so greatly beneficial, it sees that such a path is leading it along the way to heaven, according to what

it reads, hears, and knows about God's commandments. Even if it wanted to, it could not really desire anything else but to abandon itself into God's hands. And even this powerlessness distresses it, for it thinks it is not obeying its confessor. Obeying and not offending our Lord, it thinks, is the complete remedy against deception. Thus, in its opinion, it would not commit knowingly a venial sin even were others to crush it to pieces. It is intensely afflicted upon seeing that it cannot free itself from unknowingly committing many venial sins.

3. God gives these souls the strongest desire not to displease Him in anything, however small, and the desire to avoid if possible every imperfection. For this reason alone, if for no other, the soul wants to flee people, and it has great envy of those who have lived in deserts. On the other hand, it would want to enter into the midst of the world to try to play a part in getting even one soul to praise God more. A woman in this stage of prayer is distressed by the natural hindrance there is to her entering the world, and she has great envy of those who have the freedom to cry out and spread the news abroad about who this great God of hosts is.

4. Oh, poor little butterfly, bound with so many chains which do not let you fly where you would like! Have pity on it, my God! Ordain that it might somehow fulfill its desires for your honor and glory. Do not be mindful of the little it deserves and of its lowly nature. You have the power, Lord, to make the great sea and the large river Jordan roll back and allow the children of Israel to pass.¹ Yet, do not take pity on this little butterfly! Helped by your strength, it can suffer many trials; it is determined to do so and desires to suffer them. Extend Your powerful arm,² Lord, that this soul might not spend its life in things so base. Let Your grandeur appear in a creature so feminine and lowly, whatever the cost to her, so that the world may know that this grandeur is not hers at all and may praise You. This praise is what she desires, and she would give a thousand lives—if she had that many—if one soul were to praise You a little more through her; and she would consider such

lives very well spent. She understands in all truth that she doesn't deserve to suffer for You a tiny trial, much less die.

5. I don't know what my goal was in saying this, Sisters, nor why I said it, for these words were not planned. Let us realize that such effects are undoubtedly left by these suspensions and ecstasies. The desires are not passing but remain, and when an occasion arises to manifest their presence, one sees that they are not feigned. Why do I say they remain? Sometimes the soul feels, and in the smallest things, that it is a coward and so timid and frightened it doesn't think that it has the courage to do anything. I understand that the Lord leaves it then to its own human nature for its own greater good. It then sees that if it had been able to do something, the power was given by His Majesty. This truth is seen with a clarity that leaves the soul annihilated within itself and with deeper knowledge of God's mercy and grandeur—attributes the Lord desired to show to something so low. But usually its state is like that we've just mentioned.

6. Note one thing, Sisters, about these great desires to see our Lord: they sometimes afflict so much that you must necessarily avoid fostering them and must distract yourselves; if you can, I mean, for in other instances which I shall mention further on,³ this cannot be done, as you will see. As for these initial desires, it's sometimes possible to distract oneself from them because there is every reason to be conformed to the will of God and say what St. Martin said.⁴ A person can reflect upon St. Martin's words if the desires afflict a great deal. Since it seems these desires are characteristic of very advanced persons, the devil could instigate them so that we might think we are advanced. It is always good to walk with fear. But my opinion is that he would not be able to give the quiet and peace this suffering gives the soul; he would be stirring some passion, as happens when we suffer over worldly things. But a person who has no experience of the authentic and the inauthentic desires will think his desires are something great and will help them

along as much as he can and will do serious harm to his health. For this suffering is continual, or at least very habitual.

7. Also note that a weak constitution is wont to cause these kinds of suffering, especially in the case of tender persons who will weep over every little thing. A thousand times they will be led to think they weep for God, but they will not be doing so. And it can even happen, when tears flow in abundance (I mean, that for a time every little word the soul hears or thinks concerning God becomes the cause of tears), that some humor has reached the heart thereby contributing more to the tears than does love for God; for seemingly these persons will never finish weeping. Since they have already heard that tears are good, they will not restrain themselves nor would they desire to do anything else; and they help the tears along as much as they can. The devil's aim here is that these persons become so weak they will afterward be unable either to pray or to keep their rule.

8. It seems to me I can see you asking what you should do since I mark danger everywhere and in something as good as tears I think there can be deception; you are wondering if I may be the one who is deceived. And it could be that I am. But believe me, I do not speak without having seen that these false tears can be experienced by some persons; although not by me, for I am not at all tender. Rather, I have a heart so hard that sometimes I am distressed; although when the inner fire is intense, the heart, no matter how hard, distills like an alembic. You will indeed know when this fire is the source of the tears, for they are then more comforting and bring peace not turbulence, and seldom cause harm. The good that lies in the false tears—when there is any good—is that the damage is done to the body (I mean when there is humility) and not to the soul. But even if there is no harm done to the body, it won't be wrong to be suspicious about tears.

9. Let's not think that everything is accomplished through much weeping but set our hands to the task of hard work and virtue. These are what we must pay attention to; let the tears come when God sends them and without any effort on our part to induce them. These tears from God will irrigate this dry

earth, and they are a great help in producing fruit. The less attention we pay to them the more there are, for they are the water that falls from heaven. The tears we draw out by tiring ourselves in digging cannot compare with the tears that come from God, for often in digging we shall get worn out and not find even a puddle of water much less a flowing well. Therefore, Sisters, I consider it better for us to place ourselves in the presence of the Lord and look at His mercy and grandeur and at our own lowliness, and let Him give us what He wants, whether water or dryness. He knows best what is suitable for us. With such an attitude we shall go about refreshed, and the devil will not have so much chance to play tricks on us.

10. In the midst of these experiences that are both painful and delightful together, our Lord sometimes gives the soul feelings of jubilation and a strange prayer it doesn't understand. I am writing about this favor here so that if He grants it to you, you may give Him much praise and know what is taking place. It is, in my opinion, a deep union of the faculties; but our Lord nonetheless leaves them free that they might enjoy this joy – and the same goes for the senses – without understanding what it is they are enjoying or how they are enjoying. What I'm saying seems like gibberish, but certainly the experience takes place in this way, for the joy is so excessive the soul wouldn't want to enjoy it alone but wants to tell everyone about it so that they might help this soul praise our Lord. All its activity is directed to this praise. Oh, how many festivals and demonstrations the soul would organize, if it could, that all might know its joy! It seems it has found itself and that, like the father of the prodigal son, it would want to prepare a festival and invite all⁵ because it sees itself in an undoubtedly safe place, at least for the time being. And I hold that there is reason for its desires. The devil cannot give this experience, because there is so much interior joy in the very intimate part of the soul and so much peace; and all the happiness stirs the soul to the praises of God.

11. To be silent and conceal this great impulse of happiness, when experiencing it, is no small pain. St. Francis must have

felt this impulse when the robbers struck him, for he ran through the fields crying out and telling the robbers that he was the herald of the great King; and also other saints must feel it who go to deserts to be able to proclaim as St. Francis these praises of their God. I knew a saint named Friar Peter of Alcántara—for I believe from the way he lived that he was one—who did this very thing,⁶ and those who at one time listened to him thought he was crazy. Oh, what blessed madness, Sisters! If only God would give it to us all! And what a favor He has granted you by bringing you to this house where, when the Lord gives you this favor and you tell others about it, you will receive help rather than the criticism you would receive in the world. This proclamation is so unusual there that one is not at all surprised at the criticism.

12. Oh, how unfortunate the times and miserable the life in which we now live; happy are they whose good fortune it is to remain apart from the world. Sometimes it is a particular joy for me to see these Sisters gathered together and feeling such great joy at being in the monastery that they praise our Lord as much as possible. It is seen very clearly that their praises rise from the interior of the soul. I would want you to praise Him often, Sisters; for the one who begins, awakens the others. In what better way can you, when together, use your tongues than in the praises of God since we have so many reasons for praising Him?

13. May it please His Majesty to give us this prayer often since it is so safe and beneficial; to acquire it is impossible because it is something very supernatural. And it may last a whole day. The soul goes about like a person who has drunk a great deal but not so much as to be drawn out of his senses; or like a person suffering melancholy who has not lost his reason completely but cannot free himself from what is in his imagination—nor can anyone else.

These are inelegant comparisons for something so precious, but I can't think up any others. The joy makes a person so forgetful of self and of all things that he doesn't advert to, nor can he speak of anything other than the praises of God which proceed from his joy.

Let us all help this soul, my daughters. Why do we want to have more discretion? What can give us greater happiness? And may all creatures help us forever and ever, amen, amen, amen!

Chapter 7

Discusses the kind of suffering those souls to whom God grants the favors mentioned feel concerning their sins. Tells what a great mistake it is, however spiritual one may be, not to practice keeping the humanity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ present in one's mind; also His most sacred Passion and life, His glorious Mother, and the saints. The chapter is very helpful.

YOU WILL THINK, Sisters, that these souls to whom the Lord communicates Himself in this unusual way will already be so sure of enjoying Him forever that they will have nothing to fear nor sins to weep over. Those especially who have not attained these favors from God will think this, for if they had enjoyed them, they would know what I'm going to say. But to think the above would be a great mistake because suffering over one's sins increases the more one receives from our God. And, for my part, I hold that until we are there where nothing can cause pain this suffering will not be taken away.

2. True, sometimes there is greater affliction than at other times; and the affliction is also of a different kind, for the soul doesn't think about the suffering it will undergo on account of its sins but of how ungrateful it has been to One to whom it owes so much and who deserves so much to be served. For in these grandeurs God communicates to it, it understands much more about Him. It is astonished at how bold it was; it weeps over its lack of respect; it thinks its foolishness was so excessive that it never finishes grieving over that foolishness when it recalls that for such base things it abandoned so great a Majes-

ty. Much more does it recall this foolishness than it does the favors it receives, though these favors are as remarkable as the ones mentioned or as those still to be spoken of. These favors are like the waves of a large river in that they come and go; but the memory these souls have of their sins clings like thick mire. It always seems that these sins are alive in the memory, and this is a heavy cross.

3. I know a person¹ who, apart from wanting to die in order to see God, wanted to die so as not to feel the continual pain of how ungrateful she had been to One to whom she ever owed so much and would owe. Thus it didn't seem to her that anyone's wickedness could equal her own, for she understood that there could be no one else from whom God would have had so much to put up with and to whom He had granted so many favors. As for the fear of hell, such persons don't have any. That they might lose God, at times—though seldom—distresses them very much. All their fear is that God might allow them out of His hand to offend Him, and they find themselves in as miserable a state as they were once before. In regard to their own suffering or glory, they don't care. If they don't want to stay long in purgatory, the reason comes from the fact of their not wanting to be away from God—as are those who are in purgatory—rather than from the sufferings undergone there.

4. I wouldn't consider it safe for a soul, however favored by God, to forget that at one time it saw itself in a miserable state. Although recalling this misery is a painful thing, doing so is helpful for many. Perhaps it is because I have been so wretched that I have this opinion and am always mindful of my misery. Those who have been good will not have to feel this pain, although there will always be failures as long as we live in this mortal body. No relief is afforded this suffering by the thought that our Lord has already pardoned and forgotten the sins. Rather, it adds to the suffering to see so much goodness and realize that favors are granted to one who deserves nothing but hell. I think such a realization was a great martyrdom for St. Peter and the Magdalene. Since their love for God had grown so deep and they had received so many favors and come to know the grandeur and majesty of God, the remembrance of

their misery would have been difficult to suffer, and they would have suffered it with tender sentiments.

5. It will also seem to you that anyone who enjoys such lofty things will no longer meditate on the mysteries of the most sacred humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Such a person would now be engaged entirely in loving. This is a matter I wrote about at length elsewhere.² They have contradicted me about it and said that I don't understand, because these are paths along which our Lord leads, and that when souls have already passed beyond the beginning stages it is better for them to deal with things concerning the divinity and flee from corporeal things. Nonetheless, they will not make me admit that such a road is a good one. Now it could be that I'm mistaken and that we are all saying the same thing. But I myself see that the devil tried to deceive me in this matter, and thus I have so learned my lesson from experience that I think, although I've spoken on this topic at other times,³ I will speak of it again here that you will proceed very carefully in this matter. And take notice that I dare say you should not believe anyone who tells you something else. I'll try to explain myself better than I did elsewhere. If anyone perhaps has written what a certain person told me, this would be good if the matter is explained at length, but to speak of it so summarily could do much harm to those of us who are not well informed.⁴

6. It will also seem to some souls that they cannot think about the Passion, or still less about the Blessed Virgin and the lives of the saints; the remembrance of both of these latter is so very helpful and encouraging. I cannot imagine what such souls are thinking of. To be always withdrawn from corporeal things and enkindled in love is the trait of angelic spirits not of those who live in mortal bodies. It's necessary that we speak to, think about, and become the companions of those who having had a mortal body accomplished such great feats for God. How much more is it necessary not to withdraw through one's own efforts from all our good and help which is the most sacred humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. I cannot believe that these souls do so, but they just don't understand; and they will do harm to themselves and to others. At least I assure them that

they will not enter these last two dwelling places. For if they lose the guide, who is the good Jesus, they will not hit upon the right road. It will be quite an accomplishment if they remain safely in the other dwelling places. The Lord Himself says that He is the way; the Lord says also that He is the light and that no one can go to the Father but through Him, and "anyone who sees me sees my Father."⁵ They will say that another meaning is given to these words. I don't know about those other meanings; I have got along very well with this one that my soul always feels to be true.

7. There are some souls—and there are many who have spoken about it to me—who brought by our Lord to perfect contemplation would like to be in that prayer always; but that is impossible. Yet this favor of the Lord remains with them in such a way that afterward they cannot engage as before in discursive thought about the mysteries of the Passion and life of Christ. I don't know the reason, but this inability is very common, for the intellect becomes less capable of meditation. I believe the reason must be that since in meditation the whole effort consists in seeking God and that once God is found the soul becomes used to seeking Him again through the work of the will, the soul doesn't want to tire itself by working with the intellect. Likewise, it seems to me that since this generous faculty, which is the will, is already enkindled, it wants to avoid, if it can, using the other faculty; and it doesn't go wrong. But to avoid this will be impossible, especially before the soul reaches these last two dwelling places; and the soul will lose time, for the will often needs the help of the intellect so as to be enkindled.

8. And note this point, Sisters; it is important, and so I want to explain it further: The soul desires to be completely occupied in love and does not want to be taken up with anything else, but to be so occupied is impossible for it even though it may want to; for although the will is not dead, the fire that usually makes it burn is dying out, and someone must necessarily blow on the fire so that heat will be given off. Would it be good for a soul with this dryness to wait for fire to come down from heaven to burn this sacrifice that it is making

of itself to God, as did our Father Elijah?⁶ No, certainly not, nor is it right to expect miracles. The Lord works them for this soul when He pleases, as was said and will be said further on.⁷ But His Majesty wants us to consider ourselves undeserving of them because of our wretchedness, and desires that we help ourselves in every way possible. I hold for myself that until we die such an attitude is necessary however sublime the prayer may be.

9. It is true that anyone whom the Lord places in the seventh dwelling place rarely, or hardly ever, needs to make this effort. (I will give the reason for this fact when speaking of that dwelling place, if I remember.)⁸ But such a person walks continually in an admirable way with Christ, our Lord, in whom the divine and the human are joined and who is always that person's companion. As for the above, when the fire in the will that was mentioned⁹ is not enkindled and God's presence is not felt, it is necessary that we seek this presence. This is what His Majesty wants us to do, as the bride did in the *Song of Songs*,¹⁰ and He wants us to ask creatures who it is who made them—as St. Augustine says, I believe, in his *Meditations or Confessions*¹¹—and not be like dunces wasting time waiting for what was given us once before. At the beginning of the life of prayer it may be that the Lord will not give this fire in a year, or even in many years. His Majesty knows why; we must not desire to know nor is there any reason why we should. Since we know the path by which we must please God, which is that of the commandments and counsels, we should follow it very diligently, and think of His life and death and of the many things we owe Him; let the rest come when the Lord desires.

10. At this point, someone may respond that he cannot dwell on these things, and, because of what was said,¹² perhaps he will in a certain way be right. You already know that discursive thinking with the intellect is one thing and representing truths to the intellect by means of the memory is another. You may say, perhaps, that you do not understand me, and indeed it could be that I don't know how to explain the matter; but I shall do the best I can. By meditation I mean much discursive reflection with the intellect in the following way: we begin to

think about the favor God granted us in giving us His only Son, and we do not stop there, but go on to the mysteries of His whole glorious life; or we begin to think about the prayer in the garden, but the intellect doesn't stop until He is on the cross; or we take a phase of the Passion like, let us say, the arrest, and we proceed with this mystery considering in detail the things there are to think of and feel about the betrayal of Judas, the flight of the apostles, and all the rest; this kind of reflection is an admirable and very meritorious prayer.

11. This prayer is the kind that those whom God has brought to supernatural things and to perfect contemplation are right in saying they cannot practice. As I have said,¹³ I don't know the reason, but usually they cannot practice discursive reflection. But I say that a person will not be right if he says he does not dwell on these mysteries or often have them in mind, especially when the Catholic Church celebrates them. Nor is it possible for the soul to forget that it has received so much from God, so many precious signs of love, for these are living sparks that will enkindle it more in its love for our Lord. But I say this person doesn't understand himself, because the soul understands these mysteries in a more perfect manner. The intellect represents them in such a way, and they are so stamped on the memory, that the mere sight of the Lord fallen to the ground in the garden with that frightful sweat is enough to last the intellect not only an hour but many days, while it looks with a simple gaze at who He is and how ungrateful we have been for so much suffering. Soon the will responds even though it may not do so with tender feelings, with the desire to serve somehow for such a great favor and to suffer something for One who suffered so much, and with other similar desires relating to what the memory and intellect are dwelling upon. I believe that for this reason a person cannot go on to further discursive reflection on the Passion, and this inability makes him think that he cannot think about it.

12. If he doesn't dwell on these mysteries in the way that was mentioned, it is good that he strive to do so, for I know that doing so will not impede the most sublime prayer. I don't think it's good to fail to dwell often on these mysteries. If as a result

the Lord suspends the intellect, well and good; for even though the soul may not so desire He will make it abandon what it was dwelling on. And I am very certain that this procedure is not a hindrance but a very great help toward every good; the hindrance would come from a great deal of work with the discursive reflection I mentioned in the beginning. I hold that one who has advanced further along cannot practice this discursive reflection. It could be that one can, for God leads souls by many paths. But let not those who can travel by the road of discursive thought condemn those who cannot, or judge them incapable of enjoying the sublime blessings that lie enclosed in the mysteries of our good, Jesus Christ. Nor will anyone make me think, however spiritual he may be, that he will advance by trying to turn away from these mysteries.

13. There are some principles and even means that certain souls use, by which it is thought that when a person begins to experience the prayer of quiet and to relish the enjoyment and spiritual delights given by the Lord, the important thing is to remain always in that state of delight. Well, now, let them believe me and not be so absorbed, as I have said elsewhere.¹⁴ Life is long, and there are in it many trials, and we need to look at Christ our model, how He suffered them, and also at His apostles and saints, so as to bear these trials with perfection. Jesus is too good a companion for us to turn away from Him and His most blessed Mother, and He is very pleased that we grieve over His sufferings even though we sometimes leave aside our own consolation and delight. Moreover, daughters, enjoyment in prayer is not so habitual that there is not time for everything. I would be suspicious of anyone who says this delight is continual; I mean, who can never do what was mentioned. And you should be suspicious too, and strive to free yourselves from this error and avoid such absorption with all your strength. If your efforts aren't enough, tell the prioress so that she might give you some task demanding such care that this danger is removed. For if this absorption continues, it is extremely dangerous at least for the brain and the head.

14. I believe I've explained that it is fitting for souls, however spiritual, to take care not to flee from corporal things

to the extent of thinking that even the most sacred humanity causes harm. Some quote what the Lord said to His disciples that it was fitting that He go.¹⁵ I can't bear this. I would wager that He didn't say it to His most Blessed Mother, because she was firm in the faith; she knew He was God and man, and even though she loved Him more than they did, she did so with such perfection that His presence was a help rather than a hindrance. The apostles must not have been as firm then in the faith as they were afterward and as we have reason to be now. I tell you, daughters, that I consider this a dangerous path and think the devil could make one lose devotion for the most Blessed Sacrament.

15. The mistake it seemed to me I was making wasn't so extreme, rather it consisted of not delighting so much in the thought of our Lord Jesus Christ but in going along in that absorption, waiting for that enjoyment. And I realized clearly that I was proceeding badly. Since it wasn't possible for me to experience the absorption always, the mind wandered here and there. My soul, it seems to me, was like a bird flying about that doesn't know where to light; and it was losing a lot of time and not making progress in virtue or improving in prayer. I didn't understand the reason, nor would I have understood it, in my opinion, because it seemed to me that what I was doing was very correct, until a person with whom I was discussing my prayer, who was a servant of God, warned me. Afterward, I saw clearly how wrong I had been, and I never stop regretting that there had been a time in which I failed to understand that I could not gain much through such a great loss. And even if I could gain, I wouldn't want any good save that acquired through Him from whom all blessings come to us. May He be always praised, amen.

Chapter 8

Discusses how God communicates Himself to the soul through an intellectual vision; gives some counsels. Tells about the effects such a vision causes if it is genuine. Recommends secrecy concerning these favors.

FOR YOU TO SEE, SISTERS, that what I have told you is true and that the further a soul advances the more it is accompanied by the good Jesus, we will do well to discuss how, when His Majesty desires, we cannot do otherwise than walk always with Him. This is evident in the ways and modes by which His Majesty communicates Himself to us and shows us the love He bears us. He does this through some very wonderful apparitions and visions. That you might not be frightened if He grants you some of these, I want briefly to mention something about these visions—if the Lord be pleased that I succeed—so that we might praise Him very much even though He may not grant them to us. We would be praising Him because though He is filled with majesty and power He nonetheless desires to communicate thus with a creature.

2. It will happen while the soul is heedless of any thought about such a favor being granted to it, and though it never had a thought that it deserved this vision, that it will feel Jesus Christ, our Lord, beside it. Yet, it does not see Him, either with the eyes of the body or with those of the soul. This is called an intellectual vision; I don't know why. I saw the person¹ to whom God granted this favor, along with other favors I shall mention further on, quite worried in the beginning because since she didn't see anything she couldn't understand the nature of this vision. However, she knew so certainly that it was Jesus Christ, our Lord, who showed Himself to her in that way that she couldn't doubt; I mean she couldn't doubt the vision was there. As to whether it was from God or not, even though she carried with her great effects to show that it was, she nonetheless was afraid. She had never heard of an intellectual vision, nor had she thought there was such a kind. But she

understood very clearly that it was this same Lord who often spoke to her in the way mentioned.² For until He granted her this favor I am referring to, she never knew who was speaking to her, although she understood the words.

3. I know that since she was afraid about this vision (for it isn't like the imaginative one that passes quickly, but lasts many days and sometimes even more than a year), she went very worried to her confessor. He asked her how since she didn't see anything she knew that it was our Lord; what kind of face He had.³ She told him she didn't know, that she didn't see any face, and that she couldn't say any more than what she had said, that what she did know was that He was the one who spoke to her and that the vision had not been fancied. And although some persons put many fears in her, she was still frequently unable to doubt, especially when the Lord said to her: "Do not be afraid, it is I."⁴ These words had so much power that from then on she could not doubt the vision, and she was left very much strengthened and happy over such good company. She saw clearly that the vision was a great help toward walking with a habitual remembrance of God and a deep concern about avoiding anything displeasing to Him, for it seemed to her that He was always looking at her. And each time she wanted to speak with His Majesty in prayer, and even outside of it, she felt He was so near that He couldn't fail to hear her. But she didn't hear words spoken whenever she wanted; only unexpectedly when they were necessary. She felt He was walking at her right side, but she didn't experience this with those senses by which we can know that a person is beside us. This vision comes in another unexplainable, more delicate way. But it is so certain and leaves much certitude; even much more than the other visions do because in the visions that come through the senses one can be deceived, but not in the intellectual vision. For this latter brings great interior benefits and effects that couldn't be present if the experience were caused by melancholy; nor would the devil produce so much good; nor would the soul go about with such peace and continual desires to please God, and with so much contempt for everything that does not bring it to Him. Afterward she understood clearly that

the vision was not caused by the devil, which became more and more clear as time went on.

4. Nonetheless, I know that at times she went about very much frightened; at other times, with the most intense confusion, for she didn't know why so much good had come to her. We were so united, she and I, that nothing took place in her soul of which I was ignorant; so I can be a good witness. And believe me, all I have said of this matter is the truth.

It is a favor from the Lord that she bears in herself the most intense confusion and humility. If the vision were from the devil, the effects would be contrary. And since the vision is something definitely understood to be a gift from God and human effort would not be sufficient to produce this experience, the one who receives it can in no way think it is his own good but a good given through the hand of God. And even though, in my opinion, some of those favors that were mentioned are greater, this favor bears with it a particular knowledge of God. This continual companionship gives rise to a most tender love for His Majesty, to some desires even greater than those mentioned⁵ to surrender oneself totally to His service, and to a great purity of conscience because the presence at its side makes the soul pay attention to everything. For even though we already know that God is present in all we do, our nature is such that we neglect to think of this. Here the truth cannot be forgotten, for the Lord awakens the soul to His presence beside it. And even the favors that were mentioned⁶ became much more common since the soul goes about almost continually with actual love for the One who it sees and understands is at its side.

5. In sum, with respect to the soul's gain, the vision is seen to be a most wonderful and highly valuable favor. The soul thanks the Lord that He gives the vision without any merits on its part and would not exchange that blessing for any earthly treasure or delight. Thus, when the Lord is pleased to take the vision away, the soul feels very much alone. But all the efforts it could possibly make are of little avail in bringing back that companionship. The Lord gives it when He desires, and it can-

not be acquired. Sometimes also the vision is of some saint, and this too is most beneficial.

6. You will ask how if nothing is seen one knows that it is Christ, or a saint, or His most glorious Mother. This, the soul will not know how to explain, nor can it understand how it knows, but it does know with the greatest certitude. It seems easier for the soul to know when the Lord speaks; but what is more amazing is that it knows the saint, who doesn't speak but seemingly is placed there by the Lord as a help to it and as its companion. Thus there are other spiritual things that one doesn't know how to explain, but through them one knows how lowly our nature is when there is question of understanding the sublime grandeurs of God, for we are incapable even of understanding these spiritual things. But let the one to whom His Majesty gives these favors receive them with admiration and praise for Him. Thus He grants the soul particular graces through these favors. For since the favors are not granted to all, they should be highly esteemed; and one should strive to perform greater services since God in so many ways helps the soul to perform these services. Hence the soul doesn't consider itself to be any greater because of this, and it thinks that it is the one who serves God the least among all who are in the world. This soul thinks that it is more obligated to Him than anyone, and any fault it commits pierces to the core of its being, and very rightly so.

7. These effects from the vision that were mentioned⁷ and that are left in the soul can be recognized by anyone of you whom the Lord has brought by this road. Through them you can know that the vision is not an illusion or a fancy. As I have said,⁸ I hold that it would be impossible for a vision caused by the devil to last so long and benefit the soul so remarkably, clothing it with so much interior peace. It is not customary for something so evil to do something so good, nor can the devil even though he may want to. If he could, there would at once be some outward show of self-esteem and thought of being better than others. But that the soul goes about always so attached to God and with its thoughts so occupied in Him, causes the devil such rage that even though he might try he would not

often return. And God is so faithful⁹ that He will not allow the devil much leeway with a soul that doesn't aim for anything else than to please His Majesty and spend its life for His honor and glory; He will at once ordain how it may be undeceived.

8. My theme is and will be that since, as a result of these favors from God, the soul walks in the way here mentioned, His Majesty will make it be the one to gain. And if He sometimes permits the devil to tempt the soul, He will so ordain that the evil one will be defeated. As a result, daughters, if someone should walk along this road, as I have said, do not be astonished. It is good that there be fear and that we walk with more care. Nor should you be self-confident, for since you are so favored you could grow more careless. If you do not see in yourselves the effects that were mentioned,¹⁰ it will be a sign the favor is not from God. It is good that at the beginning you speak about this vision under the seal of confession with a very learned man, for learned men will give us light. Or, with some very spiritual person, if there be one available; if there isn't, it's better to speak with a very learned man. Or with both a spiritual person and a learned man if both are at hand. And should they tell you the vision is fancied, do not be concerned, for the fancy can do little good or evil. Commend yourself to the divine Majesty that He not let you be deceived. If they should tell you your vision is from the devil, it will be a greater trial, although no one will say this if he is indeed learned and the effects mentioned are present. But if he says so, I know that the Lord Himself who walks with you will console you, assure you, and give the confessor light that he may give it to you.

9. If the confessor is a person whom, although he practices prayer, the Lord has not led by this path, he will at once be frightened and condemn it. For this reason I advise you to have a confessor who is very learned and, if possible, also spiritual. The prioress should give permission for such consultation. Even though, judging by the good life you live, you may be walking securely, the prioress will be obligated to have you speak with a confessor so that both you and she may walk securely. And once you have spoken with these persons, be quiet and don't try to confer about the matter with others; at

times the devil causes some fears so excessive that they force the soul, without its having anything really to fear, not to be satisfied with one consultation. If, especially, the confessor has little experience, and the soul sees that he is fearful, and he himself makes it continue to speak of the matter, that which by rights should have remained very secret is made public, and this soul is persecuted and tormented. For while it thinks the matter is secret, it finds out that the visions are publicly known. As a result many troublesome things happen to it and could happen to its religious order, the way these times are going.¹¹ Hence a great deal of discretion is necessary in this matter, and I highly recommend it to the prioresses.

10. A prioress should not think that since a Sister has experiences like these she is better than the others. The Lord leads each one as He sees is necessary. This path is a preparation for becoming a very good servant of God, provided that one cooperate. But sometimes God leads the weakest along this path. And so there is nothing in it to approve or condemn. One should consider the virtues and who it is who serves our Lord with greater mortification, humility, and purity of conscience; this is the one who will be the holiest. Yet, little can be known here below with certitude; we must wait until the true Judge gives to each one what is merited. In heaven we will be surprised to see how different His judgment is from what we can understand here below. May He be forever praised, amen.

Chapter 9

Treats of how the Lord communicates with the soul through an imaginative vision; gives careful warning against desiring to walk by this path and the reasons for such a warning. The chapter is very beneficial.

NOW LET US COME to imaginative visions, for they say the devil meddles more in these than in the ones mentioned,¹ and it must be so. But when these imaginative visions are from our Lord, they in some way seem to me more

beneficial because they are in greater conformity with our nature. I'm excluding from that comparison the visions the Lord shows in the last dwelling place; no other visions are comparable to those.

2. Well now let us consider what I have told you in the preceding chapter² about how this Lord is present. It is as though we had in a gold vessel a precious stone having the highest value and curative powers. We know very certainly that it is there although we have never seen it. But the powers of the stone do not cease to benefit us provided that we carry it with us.³ Although we have never seen this stone, we do not on that account cease to prize it, because through experience we have seen that it has cured us of some illnesses for which it is suited. But we do not dare look at it or open the reliquary, nor can we, because the manner of opening this reliquary is known solely by the one to whom the jewel belongs. Even though he lent us the jewel for our own benefit, he has kept the key to the reliquary and will open it, as something belonging to him when he desires to show us the contents, and he will take the jewel back when he wants to, as he does.

3. Well, let us say now that sometimes he wants to open the reliquary suddenly in order to do good to the one to whom he has lent it. Clearly, a person will afterward be much happier when he remembers the admirable splendor of the stone, and hence it will remain more deeply engrained in his memory. So it happens here: when our Lord is pleased to give more delight to this soul, He shows it clearly His most sacred humanity in the way He desires; either as He was when He went about in the world or as He is after His resurrection. And even though the vision happens so quickly that we could compare it to a streak of lightning, this most glorious image remains so engraved on the imagination that I think it would be impossible to erase it until it is seen by the soul in that place where it will be enjoyed without end.

4. Although I say "image" let it be understood that, in the opinion of the one who sees it, it is not a painting but truly alive, and sometimes the Lord is speaking to the soul and even revealing great secrets. But you must understand that even

though the soul is detained by this vision for some while, it can no more fix its gaze on the vision than it can on the sun. Hence this vision always passes very quickly, but not because its brilliance is painful, like the sun's, to the inner eye. It is the inner eye that sees all of this. I wouldn't know how to say anything about a vision that comes through the exterior sense of sight, because this person mentioned, of whom I can speak so particularly,⁴ had not undergone such a vision, and one cannot be sure about what one has not experienced. The brilliance of this inner vision is like that of an infused light coming from a sun covered by something as transparent as a properly-cut diamond. The garment seems made of a fine Dutch linen. Almost every time God grants this favor the soul is in rapture, for in its lowliness it cannot suffer so frightening a sight.

5. I say "frightening" because although the Lord's presence is the most beautiful and delightful a person could imagine even were he to live and labor a thousand years thinking about it (for it far surpasses the limitations of our imagination or intellect), this presence bears such extraordinary majesty that it causes the soul extreme fright. Certainly it's not necessary here to ask how the soul knows, without having been told, who the Lord is, for it is clearly revealed that He is the Lord of heaven and earth. This is not true of earthly kings, for in themselves they would be held in little account were it not for their retinue, or unless they tell who they are.

6. O Lord, how we Christians fail to know you! What will that day be when You come to judge, for even when You come here with so much friendliness to speak with your bride, she experiences such fear when she looks at You? Oh, daughters, what will it be like when He says in so severe a voice, *depart you who are cursed by My Father?*⁵

7. As a result of this favor granted by God, let us keep in mind the above thought, for it will be no small blessing. Even St. Jerome, though he was a saint, kept it in mind. And thus all that we suffer here in the strict observance of the religious life will seem to us nothing; for, however long it lasts, it lasts but a moment in comparison with eternity. I tell you truthfully that as wretched as I am I have never had fear of the torments of

hell, for they would be nothing if compared to what I recall the condemned will experience upon seeing the anger in these eyes of the Lord, so beautiful, meek, and kind. It doesn't seem my heart could suffer such a sight. I've felt this way all my life. How much more will the person fear this sight to whom the Lord has thus represented Himself since the experience is so powerful that it carries that person out of his senses. The reason the soul is suspended must be that the Lord helps its weakness which is joined to His greatness in this sublime communication.

8. When the soul can remain a long while gazing upon this Lord, I don't believe it will be experiencing a vision but some intense reflection in which some likeness is fashioned in the imagination; compared with a vision this likeness is similar to something dead.

9. It happens to some persons (and I know this is true, for they have spoken with me—and not just three or four but many) that their imagination is so weak, or their intellect so effective, or I don't know what the cause is, that they become absorbed in their imagination to the extent that everything they think about seems to be clearly seen. Yet, if they were to see a real vision, they would know without any doubt whatsoever their mistake, for they themselves are composing what they see with their imagination. This imagining doesn't have any effect afterward, but they are left cold—much more than if they were to see a devotional image. It's very wise not to pay any attention to this kind of imagining and thus what was seen is forgotten much more than a dream.

10. In the vision we are dealing with the above is not so: rather, while the soul is very far from thinking that anything will be seen, or having the thought even pass through its mind, suddenly the vision is represented to it all at once and stirs all the faculties and senses with a great fear and tumult so as to place them afterward in that happy peace. Just as there was a tempest and tumult that came from heaven when St. Paul was hurled to the ground,⁶ here in this interior world there is a great stirring; and in a moment, as I have said,⁷ all remains calm, and this soul is left so well instructed about so many

great truths that it has no need of any other master. For without any effort on the soul's part, true Wisdom has taken away the mind's dullness and leaves a certitude, which lasts for some time, that this favor is from God. However much the soul is told the contrary, others cannot then cause it fear that there could be any deception. Afterward, if the confessor puts fear in it, God allows it to waver and think that because of its sins it could possibly be deceived. But it does not believe this; rather, as I have said concerning those other things,⁸ the devil can stir up doubts, as he does with temptations against matters of faith, that do not allow the soul to be firm in its certitude. But the more the devil fights against that certitude, the more certain the soul is that the devil could not have left it with so many blessings, as they really are, for he cannot do so much in the interior of the soul. The devil can present a vision, but not with this truth and majesty and these results.

11. Since the confessors cannot witness this vision—nor, perhaps, can it be explained by the one to whom God grants this favor—they fear and rightly so. Thus it's necessary to proceed with caution, wait for the time when these apparitions will bear fruit, and move along little by little looking for the humility they leave in the soul and the fortitude in virtue. If the vision is from the devil, he will soon show a sign, and will be caught in a thousand lies. If the confessor has experience and has undergone these experiences, he needs little time for discernment; immediately in the account given he will see whether the vision is from God or the imagination or the devil, especially if His Majesty has given him the gift of discernment of spirits. If he has this latter as well as learning, even though he may have no experience, he will recognize the true vision very well.

12. What is necessary, Sisters, is that you proceed very openly and truthfully with your confessor. I don't mean in regard to telling your sins, for that is obvious, but in giving an account of your prayer. If you do not give such an account, I am not sure you are proceeding well, nor that it is God who is teaching you. He is very fond of our speaking as truthfully and clearly to the one who stands in His place as we would to Him

and of our desiring that the confessor understand all our thoughts and even more our deeds however small they be. If you do this you don't have to go about disturbed or worried. Even if the vision is not from God, it will do you no harm if you have humility and a good conscience. His Majesty knows how to draw good from evil, and the road along which the devil wanted to make you go astray will be to your greater gain. Thinking that God grants you such wonderful favors, you will force yourselves to please Him more and be always remembering His image. As a very learned man said,⁹ the devil is a great painter and that if the devil were to show him a living image of the Lord, he wouldn't be grieved but allow the image to awaken his devotion, and that he would thereby wage war on the devil with that evil-one's own wickedness. Even though a painter may be a very poor one, a person shouldn't on that account fail to reverence the image he makes if it is a painting of our every Good.

13. That learned man was strongly opposed to the advice some gave about making the fig¹⁰ when seeing a vision, for he used to say that wherever we see a painting of our King we must reverence it. And I see that he is right, because even here below a similar action would be regretted: If a person knew that before a portrait of himself another whom he loved manifested such contempt, he would be unhappy about the act. Well how much greater reason there is always to have respect for any crucifix or portrait we see of our Emperor? Although I have written of this elsewhere,¹¹ I am glad to write of it here, for I saw that a person went about in distress when ordered to use this remedy.¹² I don't know who invented a thing that could so torment a person who wasn't able to do anything else than obey, if the confessor gave her this counsel, because she thought she would go astray if she didn't obey. My counsel is that even though a confessor gives you such advice, you should humbly tell him this reason and not accept his counsel. The good reasons given me by that learned man I found very acceptable.

14. A wonderful benefit the soul draws from this favor of the Lord is that when it thinks of Him or of His life and Passion

it remembers His most meek and beautiful countenance. This remembrance is the greatest consolation, just as here below it would be far more consoling to see a person who has done a great deal of good for us than someone we had never met. I tell you that so delightful a remembrance brings much consolation and benefit.

Many are the other blessings these visions bring, but since so much has been said about such effects, and more will be said, I don't want to tire myself, or tire you, but advise you strongly that when you learn or hear that God grants these favors to souls you never beseech Him or desire Him to lead you by this path.

15. Although this path may seem to you very good, one to be highly esteemed and revered, desiring it is inappropriate for certain reasons: First, the desire to be given what you have never deserved shows a lack of humility, and so I believe that whoever desires this path will not have much humility. Just as the thoughts of a lowly workman are far from any desire to be king since such a thing seems impossible to him, and he thinks he doesn't deserve it, so too with the humble person in similar matters. I believe that these favors will never be given to those who desire them, because before granting them God gives a deep self-knowledge. For how will he who has such desires understand in truth that he is being granted a very great favor at not being in hell? Second, such a person will very certainly be deceived or in great danger because the devil needs nothing more than to see a little door open before playing a thousand tricks on us. Third, the imagination itself, when there is a great desire, makes a person think that he sees what he desires and hears it, as with those who desiring something during the day and thinking a great deal about it happen to dream of it at night. Fourth, it would be extremely bold to want to choose a path while not knowing what suits me more. Such a matter should be left to the Lord who knows me—for He leads me along the path that is fitting—so that in all things I might do His will. Fifth, do you think the trials suffered by those to whom the Lord grants these favors are few? No, they are ex-

traordinary and of many kinds. How do you know you would be able to bear them? Sixth, by the very way you think you will gain, you will lose, as Saul did by being king.¹³

16. In sum, Sisters, besides these reasons there are others; believe me, the safest way is to want only what God wants. He knows more than we ourselves do, and He loves us. Let us place ourselves in His hands so that His will may be done in us, and we cannot err if with a determined will we always maintain this attitude. And you must note that greater glory is not merited by receiving a large number of these favors; rather, on the contrary the recipients of these favors are obliged to serve more since they have received more. The Lord doesn't take away from us that which, because it lies within our power, is more meritorious. So there are many holy persons who have never received one of these favors; and others who receive them but are not holy. And do not think the favors are given continually; rather, for each time the Lord grants them there are many trials. Thus, the soul doesn't think about receiving more but about how to serve for what it has received.

17. It is true that this vision must be a powerful help toward possessing the virtues with higher perfection, but the person who has gained them at the cost of his own labors will merit much more. I know a person or two persons—one was a man—to whom the Lord had granted some of these favors, who were so desirous of serving His Majesty at their own cost, without these great delights, and so anxious to suffer that they complained to our Lord because He bestowed the favors on them, and if they could decline receiving these gifts they would do so.¹⁴ I am speaking not of the delights coming from these visions—for in the end these persons see that the visions are very beneficial and to be highly esteemed—but of those the Lord gives in contemplation.

18. It is true that these desires also, in my opinion, are supernatural and characteristic of souls very much inflamed in love. Such souls would want the Lord to see that they do not serve Him for pay. Thus, as I have said,¹⁵ they never, as a motive for making the effort to serve more, think about receiv-

ing glory for anything they do. But their desire is to satisfy love, and it is love's nature to serve with deeds in a thousand ways. If it could, love would want to discover ways of consuming the soul within itself. And if it were necessary to be always annihilated for the greater honor of God, love would do so very eagerly. May He be praised forever, amen. For in lowering Himself to commune with such miserable creatures, He wants to show His greatness.

Chapter 10

Tells about other favors God grants the soul, in a way different from those just mentioned, and of the great profit that comes from them.

IN MANY WAYS does the Lord communicate Himself to the soul through these apparitions. He grants some of them when it is afflicted; others, when a great trial is about to come; others, so that His Majesty might take His delight in the soul and give delight to it. There's no reason to go into further detail about each, since my intention is only to explain the different favors there are on this road, insofar as I understand them. Thus you will know, Sisters, their nature and their effects, lest we fancy that everything imagined is a vision. When what you see is an authentic vision, you won't go about disturbed or afflicted if you understand that such a thing is possible. The devil gains much and is extremely pleased to see a soul afflicted and disquieted, for he knows that disturbance impedes it from being totally occupied in loving and praising God.

His Majesty communicates Himself in other ways that are more sublime, and less dangerous because the devil, I believe, will be unable to counterfeit them. Thus, since these latter are something very secret, it is difficult to explain them, whereas the imaginative visions are easier to explain.

2. It will happen, when the Lord is pleased, that while the soul is in prayer and very much in its senses a suspension will suddenly be experienced in which the Lord will reveal deep

secrets. It seems the soul sees these secrets in God Himself, for they are not visions of the most sacred humanity. Although I say the soul sees, it doesn't see anything, for the favor is not an imaginative vision but very much an intellectual one. In this vision it is revealed how all things are seen in God and how He has them all in Himself.¹ This favor is most beneficial. Even though it passes in a moment, it remains deeply engraved in the soul and causes the greatest confusion. The evil of offending God is seen more clearly, because while being in God Himself (I mean being within Him) we commit great evils. I want to draw a comparison — if I succeed — so as to explain this to you. For although what I said is true, and we hear it often, either we do not pay attention to this truth or we do not want to understand it. If the matter were understood, it doesn't seem it would be possible to be so bold.

3. Let's suppose that God is like an immense and beautiful dwelling or palace and that this palace, as I say, is God Himself.² Could the sinner, perhaps, so as to engage in his evil deeds leave this palace? No, certainly not; rather, within the palace itself, that is within God Himself, the abominations, indecent actions, and evil deeds committed by us sinners take place. Oh, frightful thought, worthy of deep reflection, and very beneficial for those of us who know little. We don't completely understand these truths, for otherwise it wouldn't be possible to be so foolishly audacious! Let us consider, Sisters, the great mercy and compassion of God in not immediately destroying us there, and be extremely thankful to Him, and let us be ashamed to feel resentment about anything that is said or done against us. The greatest evil of the world is that God, our Creator, suffers so many evil things from His creatures within His very self and that we sometimes resent a word said in our absence and perhaps with no evil intention.

4. Oh, human misery! When, daughters, will we imitate this great God? Oh, let us not think we are doing anything by suffering injuries, but we should very eagerly endure everything, and let us love the one who offends us since this great God has not ceased to love us even though we have offended Him very

much. Thus the Lord is right in wanting all to pardon the wrongs done to them.³

I tell you, daughters, that even though this vision passes quickly it is a great favor from our Lord if one desires to benefit from it by keeping it habitually present.

5. It also happens very quickly and ineffably that God will show within Himself a truth that seems to leave in obscurity all those there are in creatures, and one understands very clearly that God alone is Truth, unable to lie.⁴ What David says in a psalm about every man being a liar is clearly understood.⁵ However frequently the verse may be heard, it is never understood as it is in this vision. God is everlasting Truth. I am reminded of Pilate, how he was often questioning our Lord when during the Passion he asked Him, "What is truth?"⁶ and of the little we understand here below about this supreme Truth.

6. I would like to be able to explain more about this, but it is unexplainable. Let us conclude, Sisters, that in order to live in conformity with our God and Spouse in something, it will be well if we always study diligently how to walk in this truth. I'm not merely saying that we should not tell lies, for in that regard, glory to God, I already notice that you take great care in these houses not to tell a lie for anything. I'm saying that we should walk in truth before God and people in as many ways as possible. Especially, there should be no desire that others consider us better than we are. And in our works we should attribute to God what is His and to ourselves what is ours and strive to draw out the truth in everything. Thus, we shall have little esteem for this world, which is a complete lie and falsehood, and as such will not endure.

7. Once I was pondering why our Lord was so fond of this virtue of humility, and this thought came to me—in my opinion not as a result of reflection but suddenly: It is because God is supreme Truth; and to be humble is to walk in truth, for it is a very deep truth that of ourselves we have nothing good but only misery and nothingness. Whoever does not understand this walks in falsehood. The more anyone understands it the more he pleases the supreme Truth because he is walking in

truth. Please God, Sisters, we will be granted the favor never to leave this path of self-knowledge, amen.

8. Our Lord grants these favors to the soul because, as to one to whom He is truly betrothed, one who is already determined to do His will in everything, He desires to give it some knowledge of how to do His will and of His grandeurs. There's no reason to deal with more than these two things I mentioned⁷ since they seem to me very beneficial. In similar things there is nothing to fear; rather, the Lord should be praised because He gives them. The devil, in my opinion, and even one's own imagination have little capacity at this level, and so the soul is left with profound satisfaction.

Chapter 11

Treats of some desires God gives the soul that are so powerful and vehement they place it in danger of death. Treats also of the benefits caused by this favor the Lord grants.

DO YOU THINK THAT all these favors the Spouse has bestowed on the soul will be sufficient to satisfy the little dove or butterfly—don't think I have forgotten it—so that it may come to rest in the place where it will die? No, certainly not; rather this little butterfly is much worse. Even though it may have been receiving these favors for many years, it always moans and goes about sorrowful because they leave it with greater pain. The reason is that since it is getting to know ever more the grandeurs of its God and sees itself so distant and far from enjoying Him, the desire for the Lord increases much more; also, love increases in the measure the soul discovers how much this great God and Lord deserves to be loved. And this desire continues gradually growing in these years so that it reaches a point of suffering as great as that I shall now speak of. I have said "years" so as to be in line with the experience of that person I've mentioned here,¹ for I well understand that one must not put limits on God; in a moment He can bring a soul to the

lofty experience mentioned here. His Majesty has the power to do whatever He wants and is eager to do many things for us.

2. Well, here is what happens sometimes to a soul that experiences these anxious longings, tears, sighs, and great impulses that were mentioned² (for all of these seem to proceed from our love with deep feelings, but they are all nothing in comparison with this other experience that I'm going to explain, for they resemble a smoking fire that though painful can be endured). While this soul is going about in this manner, burning up within itself, a blow is felt from elsewhere (the soul doesn't understand from where or how). The blow comes often through a sudden thought or word about death's delay. Or the soul will feel pierced by a fiery arrow.³ I don't say that there is an arrow, but whatever the experience, the soul realizes clearly that the feeling couldn't come about naturally. Neither is the experience that of a blow, although I said "blow"; but it causes a sharp wound. And, in my opinion, it isn't felt where earthly sufferings are felt, but in the very deep and intimate part of the soul, where this sudden flash of lightning reduces to dust everything it finds in this earthly nature of ours; for while this experience lasts nothing can be remembered about our being. In an instant the experience so binds the faculties that they have no freedom for anything except those things that will make this pain increase.

3. I wouldn't want what I say to appear to be an exaggeration. Indeed, I see that my words fall short because the experience is unexplainable. It is an enrapturing of the faculties and senses away from everything that is not a help, as I said, to feeling this affliction. For the intellect is very alive to understanding the reason why the soul feels far from God; and His Majesty helps at that time with a vivid knowledge of Himself in such a way that the pain increases to a point that makes the one who experiences it begin to cry aloud. Though she is a person who has suffered and is used to suffering severe pains, she cannot then do otherwise. This feeling is not in the body, as was said,⁴ but in the interior part of the soul. As a result, this person understood how much more severe the feelings of the soul are than those of the body, and she reflected that such must be the nature of the sufferings of souls in

purgatory, for the fact that these souls have no body doesn't keep them from suffering much more than they do through all the bodily sufferings they endure here on earth.

4. I saw a person in this condition; truly she thought she was dying, and this was not so surprising because certainly there is great danger of death.⁵ And thus, even though the experience lasts a short while, it leaves the body very disjointed, and during that time the heart beat is as slow as it would be if a person were about to render his soul to God. This is no exaggeration, for the natural heat fails, and the fire so burns the soul that with a little more intensity God would have fulfilled the soul's desires. This is true not because a person feels little or much pain in the body; although it is disjointed, as I said, in such a way that for three or four days afterward one feels great sufferings and doesn't even have the strength to write. And it even seems to me always that the body is left weaker. The reason one doesn't feel the pain must be that the interior feeling of the soul is so much greater that one doesn't pay any attention to the body. When one experiences a very sharp bodily pain, other bodily pains are hardly felt even though there may be many. I have indeed experienced this. With the presence of this spiritual pain, I don't believe that physical pain would be felt, little or much, even if the body were cut in pieces.

5. You will tell me that this feeling is an imperfection and ask why the soul doesn't conform to the will of God since it is so surrendered to Him. Until now it could do this, and has spent its life doing so. As for now, the reasoning faculty is in such a condition that the soul is not the master of it, nor can the soul think of anything else than of why it is grieving, of how it is absent from its Good, and of why it should want to live. It feels a strange solitude because no creature in all the earth provides it company, nor do I believe would any heavenly creature, not being the One whom it loves; rather, everything torments it. But the soul sees that it is like a person hanging, who cannot support himself on any earthly thing; nor can it ascend to heaven. On fire with this thirst, it cannot get to the water; and the thirst is not one that is endurable but already at such a point that nothing will take it away. Nor does the soul desire

that the thirst be taken away save by that water of which our Lord spoke to the Samaritan woman.⁶ Yet no one gives such water to the soul.

6. Oh, God help me! Lord, how You afflict Your lovers! But everything is small in comparison with what You give them afterward. It's natural that what is worth much costs much. Moreover, if the suffering is to purify this soul so that it might enter the seventh dwelling place—just as those who will enter heaven must be cleansed in purgatory—it is as small as a drop of water in the sea. Furthermore, in spite of all this torment and affliction, which cannot be surpassed, I believe, by any earthly afflictions (for this person had suffered many bodily as well as spiritual pains, but they all seemed nothing in comparison with this suffering), the soul feels that the pain is precious; so precious—it understands very well—that one could not deserve it. However, this awareness is not of a kind that alleviates the suffering in any way. But with this knowledge, the soul suffers the pain very willingly and would suffer it all its life, if God were to be thereby served; although the soul would not then die once but be always dying, for truly the suffering is no less than death.

7. Well, let us consider, Sisters, those who are in hell, who do not have this conformity or this consolation and spiritual delight which is placed by God in the soul; nor do they see that their suffering is beneficial, but they always suffer more and more. The torments of the soul are so much more severe than those of the body, and the torment souls in hell suffer is incomparably greater than the suffering we have here mentioned, and must, it is seen, last forever and ever. What, then, will the suffering of these unfortunate souls be? And what can we do or suffer in so short a life that would amount to anything if we were thereby to free ourselves of those terrible and eternal torments? I tell you it would be impossible to explain how keenly felt is the suffering of the soul, and how different it is from that of the body, if one had not experienced these things. And the Lord Himself desires that we understand this so that we may know the extraordinary debt we owe Him for bringing us to a state in which through His mercy we hope He will free us and pardon our sins.

8. Well, to return to what we were dealing with⁷—for we left this soul with much pain—this pain lasts only a short while in such intensity. At the most it will last three or four hours, in my opinion, because if it were to last a long while natural weakness would not be able to endure it unless by a miracle. It has happened that the experience lasted no more than a quarter of an hour but left the soul in pieces. Truly, that time the person lost her senses completely, and the pain came in its rigor merely from her hearing a word about life not ending. This happened while she was engaged in conversation during Easter week, the last day of the octave, after she had spent all of Easter in so much dryness she almost didn't know it was Easter. In no way can the soul resist. It can no more do so than it can, if thrown in a fire, stop flames from having heat and burning it. This feeling is not one that can be concealed from others, but those who are present are aware of the great danger in which the person lies, although they cannot be witnesses to what is taking place interiorly. True, they provide some company, as though they were shadows; and so, like shadows, do all earthly things appear to that person.

9. And that you realize, in case you might sometime have this experience, what is due to our weakness, it happens at times that while in that state, as you have seen, the soul dies with the desire to die. For the fire afflicts so much that seemingly hardly anything keeps the soul from leaving the body. The soul truly fears and lest it end up dying would want the pain to abate. The soul indeed understands that this fear is from natural weakness, because on the other hand its desire to die is not taken away. Nor can a remedy be found to remove this pain until the Lord Himself takes it away, usually by means of a great rapture, or with some vision, where the true Comforter consoles and strengthens the soul that it might desire to live as long as God wills.

10. This experience is a painful one, but the soul is left with the most beneficial effects, and fear of the trials that can come its way is lost. When compared to the painful feeling experienced in the soul, the trials don't seem to amount to anything. The benefits are such that one would be pleased to

suffer the pain often. But one can in no way do this, nor is there any means for suffering the experience again. The soul must wait until the Lord desires to give this favor, just as there is no way to resist it or remove it when it comes. The soul is left with greater contempt for the world than before because it sees that nothing in the world was any help to it in that torment, and it is much more detached from creatures because it now sees that only the Creator can console and satisfy it. And it has greater fear of offending Him, taking more care not to do so, because it sees that He can also torment as well as console.

11. Two experiences, it seems to me, which lie on this spiritual path, put a person in danger of death: the one is this pain, for it truly is a danger, and no small one; the other is overwhelming joy and delight, which reaches so extraordinary a peak that indeed the soul, I think, swoons to the point that it is hardly kept from leaving the body—indeed, its happiness could not be considered small.

Here you will see, Sisters, whether I was right in saying that courage is necessary,⁸ and whether when you ask the Lord for these favors He is right in answering as He did the sons of Zebedee, *are you able to drink the chalice?*⁹

12. I believe all of us, Sisters, will answer yes; and very rightly so, for His Majesty gives strength to the one He sees has need of it. He defends these souls in all things; when they are persecuted and criticized He answers for them as He did for the Magdalene¹⁰—if not through words, through deeds. And in the very end, before they die, He will pay for everything at once, as you will now see. May He be blessed forever, and may all creatures praise Him, amen.

THE SEVENTH DWELLING PLACES

Contains Four Chapters

Chapter 1

Treats of the great favors God grants souls that have entered the seventh dwelling places. Tells how in her opinion there is a certain difference between the soul and the spirit, although the soul is all one. The chapter contains noteworthy doctrine.

YOU WILL THINK, SISTERS, that since so much has been said about this spiritual path it will be impossible for anything more to be said. Such a thought would be very foolish. Since the greatness of God is without limits, His works are too. Who will finish telling of His mercies and grandeurs? To do so is impossible, and thus do not be surprised at what was said, and will be said, because it is but a naught in comparison to what there is to tell of God. He grants us a great favor in having communicated these things to a person through whom we can know about them. Thus the more we know about His communication to creatures the more we will praise His grandeur and make the effort to have esteem for souls in which the Lord delights so much. Each one of us has a soul, but since we do not prize souls as is deserved by creatures made in the image of God we do not understand the deep secrets that lie in them.

May it please His Majesty, if He may thereby be served, to move my pen and give me understanding of how I might say something about the many things to be said and which God reveals to the one whom He places in this dwelling place. I have

earnestly begged this of His Majesty since He knows that my intention is to make known His mercies that His name may be more praised and glorified.

2. I hope, not for myself but for you, Sisters, that He may grant me this favor. Thus you will understand how important it is for you not to impede your Spouse's celebration of this spiritual marriage with your souls, since this marriage brings so many blessings, as you will see. O great God! It seems that a creature as miserable as I should tremble to deal with a thing so foreign to what I deserve to understand. And, indeed, I have been covered with confusion wondering if it might not be better to conclude my discussion of this dwelling place with just a few words. For it seems to me that others will think I know about it through experience. This makes me extremely ashamed; for, knowing what I am, such a thought is a terrible thing. On the other hand, the thought of neglecting to explain this dwelling place seemed to me to be a temptation and weakness on my part, no matter how many of the above judgments you make about me. May God be praised and understood a little more, and let all the world cry out against me; how much more so in that I will perhaps be dead when what I write is seen. May He be blessed who lives, and will live, forever, amen.

3. When our Lord is pleased to have pity on this soul that He has already taken spiritually as His Spouse because of what it suffers and has suffered through its desires, He brings it, before the spiritual marriage is consummated, into His dwelling place which is this seventh. For just as in heaven so in the soul His Majesty must have a room where He dwells alone. Let us call it another heaven. It's very important for us, Sisters, not to think the soul is something dark. Since we do not see the soul, it usually seems that there is no such thing as interior light but only the exterior light which we all see, and that a certain darkness is in our soul. As for the soul that is not in grace, I confess this is so, but not through any fault of the Sun of Justice who dwells within it giving it being but because such a soul is incapable of receiving the light, as I believe I have said in the first dwelling place, according to what a certain person

understood.¹ For these unfortunate souls are as though in a dark prison, bound hands and feet, in regard to doing anything good that would enable them to merit, and blind and deaf. We can rightly take pity on them and reflect that at one time we were ourselves in this condition and that the Lord can also have mercy on them.

4. Let us take special care, Sisters, to beg this mercy of Him and not be careless, for it is a most generous alms to pray for those who are in mortal sin. Suppose we were to see a Christian with his hands fastened behind his back by a strong chain, bound to a post, and dying of hunger, not because of lack of food, for there are very choice dishes beside him, but because he cannot take hold of the food and eat, and even has great loathing for it; and suppose he sees that he is about to breathe his last and die, not just an earthly death but an eternal one. Wouldn't it be a terrible cruelty to stand looking at him and not feed him? Well, then, what if through your prayer the chains could be loosed? The answer is obvious. For the love of God I ask you always to remember in your prayers souls in mortal sin.

5. We are not speaking about them now but about those who already by the mercy of God have done penance for their sins and are in the state of grace. Thus we are not reflecting on something restricted to a corner but on an interior world where there is room for so many and such attractive dwelling places, as you have seen; and indeed it is right that the soul be like this since within it there is a dwelling place for God.

Now then, when His Majesty is pleased to grant the soul this divine marriage that was mentioned,² He first brings it into His own dwelling place. He desires that the favor be different from what it was at other times when He gave the soul raptures. I really believe that in rapture He unites it with Himself, as well as in the prayer of union that was mentioned.³ But it doesn't seem to the soul that it is called to enter into its center, as it is here in this dwelling place, but called to the superior part. These things matter little; whether the experience comes in one way or another, the Lord joins the soul to Himself. But He

does so by making it blind and deaf, as was St. Paul in his conversion,⁴ and by taking away perception of the nature and kind of favor enjoyed, for the great delight the soul then feels is to see itself near God. Yet when He joins it to Himself, it doesn't understand anything; for all the faculties are lost.

6. In this seventh dwelling place the union comes about in a different way: our good God now desires to remove the scales from the soul's eyes and let it see and understand, although in a strange way, something of the favor He grants it. When the soul is brought into that dwelling place, the Most Blessed Trinity, all three Persons, through an intellectual vision, is revealed to it through a certain representation of the truth. First there comes an enkindling in the spirit in the manner of a cloud of magnificent splendor; and these Persons are distinct, and through an admirable knowledge the soul understands as a most profound truth that all three Persons are one substance and one power and one knowledge and one God alone. It knows in such a way that what we hold by faith, it understands, we can say, through sight—although the sight is not with the bodily eyes nor with the eyes of the soul, because we are not dealing with an imaginative vision. Here all three Persons communicate themselves to it, speak to it, and explain those words of the Lord in the Gospel: that He and the Father and the Holy Spirit will come to dwell with the soul that loves Him and keeps His commandments.⁵

7. Oh, God help me! How different is hearing and believing these words from understanding their truth in this way! Each day this soul becomes more amazed, for these Persons never seem to leave it any more, but it clearly beholds, in the way that was mentioned,⁶ that they are within it. In the extreme interior, in some place very deep within itself, the nature of which it doesn't know how to explain, because of a lack of learning, it perceives this divine company.

8. You may think that as a result the soul will be outside itself and so absorbed that it will be unable to be occupied with anything else. On the contrary, the soul is much more occupied than before with everything pertaining to the service of God; and once its duties are over it remains with that enjoyable

company. If the soul does not fail God, He will never fail, in my opinion, to make His presence clearly known to it. It has strong confidence that since God has granted this favor He will not allow it to lose the favor. Though the soul thinks this, it goes about with greater care than ever not to displease Him in anything.

9. It should be understood that this presence is not felt so fully, I mean so clearly, as when revealed the first time or at other times when God grants the soul this gift. For if the presence were felt so clearly, the soul would find it impossible to be engaged in anything else or even to live among people. But even though the presence is not perceived with this very clear light, the soul finds itself in this company every time it takes notice. Let's say that the experience resembles that of a person who after being in a bright room with others finds himself, once the shutters are closed, in darkness. The light by which he could see them is taken away. Until it returns he doesn't see them, but not for that reason does he stop knowing they are present. It might be asked whether the soul can see them when it so desires and the light returns. To see them does not lie in its power, but depends on when our Lord desires that the window of the intellect be opened. Great is the mercy He shows in never departing from the soul and in desiring that it perceive Him so manifestly.

10. It seems that the divine Majesty desires, through this wonderful company, to prepare the soul for more. Clearly, the soul will be truly helped in every way to advance in perfection and to lose the fear it sometimes had of the other favors He granted it, as was said.⁷ Such was the experience of this person,⁸ for in everything she found herself improved, and it seemed to her, despite the trials she underwent and the business affairs she had to attend to, that the essential part of her soul never moved from that room. As a result, it seemed to her that there was, in a certain way, a division in her soul. And while suffering some great trials a little after God granted her this favor, she complained of that part of the soul, as Martha complained of Mary,⁹ and sometimes pointed out that it was there always enjoying that quietude at its own pleasure while

leaving her in the midst of so many trials and occupations that she could not keep it company.

11. This will seem to you, daughters, to be foolishness, but it truly happens in this way. Although we know that the soul is all one, what I say is no mere fancy; the experience is very common. Wherefore I said¹⁰ that interior things are seen in such a way that one understands with certitude that there is some kind of difference, a difference clearly recognized, between the soul and the spirit, even though they are both one. So delicate a division is perceived that sometimes it seems the one functions differently from the other, and so does the savor the Lord desires to give them seem different. It also seems to me that the soul and the faculties are not one but different. There are so many and such delicate things in the interior that it would be boldness on my part to set out to explain them. In heaven we will see all this, if the Lord in His mercy grants us the favor of bringing us there where we shall understand these secrets.

Chapter 2

Continues on the same subject. Explains the difference between spiritual union and spiritual marriage. Describes this difference through some delicate comparisons.

NOW THEN LET US deal with the divine and spiritual marriage, although this great favor does not come to its perfect fullness as long as we live; for if we were to withdraw from God, this remarkable blessing would be lost.

The first time the favor is granted, His Majesty desires to show Himself to the soul through an imaginative vision of His most sacred humanity so that the soul will understand and not be ignorant of receiving this sovereign gift. With other persons the favor will be received in another form. With regard to the one of whom we are speaking, the Lord represented Himself to her, just after she had received Communion, in the form of shining splendor, beauty, and majesty, as He was after His

resurrection, and told her that now it was time that she consider as her own what belonged to Him and that He would take care of what was hers, and He spoke other words destined more to be heard than to be mentioned.¹

2. It may seem that this experience was nothing new since at other times the Lord had represented Himself to the soul in such a way. The experience was so different that it left her indeed stupefied and frightened: first, because this vision came with great force; second, because of the words the Lord spoke to her; and also because in the interior of her soul, where He represented Himself to her, she had not seen other visions except the former one.² You must understand that there is the greatest difference between all the previous visions and those of this dwelling place. Between the spiritual betrothal and the spiritual marriage the difference is as great as that which exists between two who are betrothed and two who can no longer be separated.³

3. I have already said⁴ that even though these comparisons are used, because there are no others better suited to our purpose, it should be understood that in this state there is no more thought of the body than if the soul were not in it, but one's thought is only of the spirit. In the spiritual marriage, there is still much less remembrance of the body because this secret union takes place in the very interior center of the soul, which must be where God Himself is, and in my opinion there is no need of any door for Him to enter. I say there is no need of any door because everything that has been said up until now seems to take place by means of the senses and faculties, and this appearance of the humanity of the Lord must also.⁵ But that which comes to pass in the union of the spiritual marriage is very different. The Lord appears in this center of the soul, not in an imaginative vision but in an intellectual one, although more delicate than those mentioned,⁶ as He appeared to the apostles without entering through the door when He said to them *pax vobis*.⁷ What God communicates here to the soul in an instant is a secret so great and a favor so sublime—and the delight the soul experiences so extreme—that I don't know what to compare it to. I can say only that the Lord wishes to

reveal for that moment, in a more sublime manner than through any spiritual vision or taste, the glory of heaven. One can say no more—insofar as can be understood—than that the soul, I mean the spirit, is made one with God. For since His Majesty is also spirit, He has wished to show His love for us by giving some persons understanding of the point to which this love reaches so that we might praise His grandeur. For He has desired to be so joined with the creature that, just as those who are married cannot be separated,⁸ He doesn't want to be separated from the soul.

4. The spiritual betrothal is different, for the two often separate. And the union is also different because, even though it is the joining of two things into one, in the end the two can be separated and each remains by itself. We observe this ordinarily, for the favor of union with the Lord passes quickly, and afterward the soul remains without that company; I mean, without awareness of it. In this other favor from the Lord, no. The soul always remains with its God in that center. Let us say that the union is like the joining of two wax candles to such an extent that the flame coming from them is but one, or that the wick, the flame, and the wax are all one. But afterward one candle can be easily separated from the other and there are two candles; the same holds for the wick. In the spiritual marriage the union is like what we have when rain falls from the sky into a river or fount; all is water, for the rain that fell from heaven cannot be divided or separated from the water of the river. Or it is like what we have when a little stream enters the sea, there is no means of separating the two. Or, like the bright light entering a room through two different windows; although the streams of light are separate when entering the room, they become one.

5. Perhaps this is what St. Paul means in saying *He that is joined or united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him*,⁹ and is referring to this sovereign marriage, presupposing that His Majesty has brought the soul to it through union. And he also says: *For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*.¹⁰ The soul as well, I think, can say these words now because this state is the place where the little butterfly we mentioned¹¹ dies, and with

the greatest joy because its life is now Christ.

6. And that its life is Christ is understood better, with the passing of time, by the effects this life has. Through some secret aspirations the soul understands clearly that it is God who gives life to our soul. These aspirations come very, very often in such a living way that they can in no way be doubted. The soul feels them very clearly even though they are indescribable. But the feeling is so powerful that sometimes the soul cannot avoid the loving expressions they cause, such as: O Life of my life! Sustenance that sustains me! and things of this sort. For from those divine breasts where it seems God is always sustaining the soul there flow streams of milk bringing comfort to all the people of the castle. It seems the Lord desires that in some manner these others in the castle may enjoy the great deal the soul is enjoying and that from that full-flowing river, where this tiny fount is swallowed up, a spurt of that water will sometimes be directed toward the sustenance of those who in corporeal things must serve these two who are wed. Just as a distracted person would feel this water if he were suddenly bathed in it, and would be unable to avoid feeling it, so are these operations recognized, and even with greater certitude. For just as a great gush of water could not reach us if it didn't have a source, as I have said, so it is understood clearly that there is Someone in the interior depths who shoots these arrows and gives life to this life, and that there is a Sun in the interior of the soul from which a brilliant light proceeds and is sent to the faculties. The soul, as I have said,¹² does not move from that center nor is its peace lost; for the very One who gave peace to the apostles when they were together¹³ can give it to the soul.

7. It has occurred to me that this greeting of the Lord must have amounted to much more than is apparent from its sound. So, too, with the Lord's words to the glorious Magdalene that she go in peace.¹⁴ Since His words are effected in us as deeds, they must have worked in such a manner in those souls already disposed that everything corporeal in the soul was taken away and it was left in pure spirit. Thus the soul could be joined in this heavenly union with the uncreated Spirit. For it is very certain that in emptying ourselves of all that is creature and

detaching ourselves from it for the love of God, the same Lord will fill us with Himself. And thus, while Jesus our Lord was once praying for His apostles—I don't remember where—He said that they were one with the Father and with Him, just as Jesus Christ our Lord is in the Father and the Father is in Him.¹⁵ I don't know what greater love there can be than this. And all of us are included here, for His Majesty said: *I ask not only for them but for all those who also will believe in me; and He says: I am in them.*¹⁶

8. Oh, God help me, how true these words are! And how well they are understood by the soul who is in this prayer and sees for itself. How well we would all understand them if it were not for our own fault, since the words of Jesus Christ, our King and Lord, cannot fail.¹⁷ But since we fail by not disposing ourselves and turning away from all that can hinder this light, we do not see ourselves in this mirror that we contemplate, where our image is engraved.

9. Well, to return to what we were saying.¹⁸ The Lord puts the soul in this dwelling of His, which is the center of the soul itself. They say that the empyreal heaven where the Lord is does not move as do the other heavens; similarly, it seems, in the soul that enters here there are none of those movements that usually take place in the faculties and the imagination and do harm to the soul, nor do these stirrings take away its peace.

It seems I'm saying that when the soul reaches this state in which God grants it this favor, it is sure of its salvation and safe from falling again. I do not say such a thing, and wherever I so speak that it seems the soul is secure, this should be taken to mean as long as the divine Majesty keeps it in His hand and it does not offend Him. At least I know certainly that the soul doesn't consider itself safe even though it sees itself in this state and the state has lasted for some years. But it goes about with much greater fear than before, guarding itself from any small offense against God and with the strongest desires to serve Him, as will be said further on,¹⁹ and with habitual pain and confusion at seeing the little it can do and the great deal to which it is obliged. This pain is no small cross but a very great penance. For when this soul does penance, the delight will be

greater in the measure that the penance is greater. The true penance comes when God takes away the soul's health and strength for doing penance. Even though I have mentioned elsewhere²⁰ the great pain this lack causes, the pain is much more intense here. All these things must come to the soul from its roots, from where it is planted. The tree that is beside the running water is fresher and gives more fruit. What is there, then, to marvel at in the desires this soul has since its true spirit has become one with the heavenly water we mentioned?²¹

10. Now then, to return to what I was saying,²² it should not be thought that the faculties, senses, and passions are always in this peace; the soul is, yes. But in those other dwelling places, times of war, trial, and fatigue are never lacking; however, they are such that they do not take the soul from its place and its peace; that is, as a rule.

This center of our soul, or this spirit, is something so difficult to explain, and even believe in, that I think, Sisters, I'll not give you the temptation to disbelieve what I say, for I do not know how to explain this center. That there are trials and sufferings and that at the same time the soul is in peace is a difficult thing to explain. I want to make one or more comparisons for you. Please God, I may be saying something through them; but if not, I know that I'm speaking the truth in what I say.

11. The King is in His palace and there are many wars in his kingdom and many painful things going on, but not on that account does he fail to be at his post. So here, even though in those other dwelling places there is much tumult and there are many poisonous creatures and the noise is heard, no one enters that center dwelling place and makes the soul leave. Nor do the things the soul hears make it leave; even though they cause it some pain, the suffering is not such as to disturb it and take away its peace. The passions are now conquered and have a fear of entering the center because they would go away from there more subdued.

Our entire body may ache; but if the head is sound, the head will not ache just because the body aches.

I am laughing to myself over these comparisons for they do not satisfy me, but I don't know any others. You may think what you want; what I have said is true.

Chapter 3

Deals with the wonderful effects of this prayer that was mentioned. It is necessary to pay attention and heed to these effects, for the difference between them and the previous ones is remarkable.

NOW, THEN, WE ARE SAYING that this little butterfly has already died, with supreme happiness for having found repose and because Christ lives in it. Let us see what life it lives, or how this life differs from the life it was living. For from the effects, we shall see if what was said is true. By what I can understand these effects are the following.¹

2. The first effect is a forgetfulness of self, for truly the soul, seemingly, no longer is, as was said.² Everything is such that this soul doesn't know or recall that there will be heaven or life or honor for it, because it employs all it has in procuring the honor of God. It seems the words His Majesty spoke to her produced the deed in her. They were that she look after what is His and that He would look after what is hers.³ Thus, the soul doesn't worry about all that can happen. It experiences strange forgetfulness, for, as I say, seemingly the soul no longer is or would want to be anything in anything, except when it understands that there can come from itself something by which the glory and honor of God may increase even one degree. For this purpose the soul would very willingly lay down its life.

3. Don't think by this, daughters, that a person fails to remember to eat and sleep — doing so is no small torment — and to do all that he is obliged to in conformity with his state in life. We are speaking of interior matters, for there is little to say about exterior works. Rather, the soul's pain lies in seeing that what it can now do by its own efforts amounts to nothing. For

no earthly thing would it fail to do all it can and understands to be for the service of our Lord.

4. The second effect is that the soul has a great desire to suffer, but not the kind of desire that disturbs it as previously. For the desire left in these souls that the will of God be done in them reaches such an extreme that they think everything His Majesty does is good. If He desires the soul to suffer, well and good; if not, it doesn't kill itself as it used to.

5. These souls also have a deep interior joy when they are persecuted, with much more peace than that mentioned, and without any hostile feelings toward those who do, or desire to do, them evil. On the contrary, such a soul gains a particular love for its persecutors, in such a way that if it sees these latter in some trial it feels compassion and would take on any burden to free them from their trial, and eagerly recommends them to God and would rejoice to lose the favors His Majesty grants it if He would bestow these same gifts on those others so that they wouldn't offend our Lord.

6. You have already seen the trials and afflictions these souls have experienced in order to die so as to enjoy our Lord.⁴ What surprises me most of all now is that they have just as great a desire to serve Him and that through them He be praised and that they may benefit some soul if they can. For not only do they not desire to die but they desire to live very many years suffering the greatest trials if through these they can help that the Lord be praised, even though in something very small. If they knew for certain that in leaving the body the soul would enjoy God, they wouldn't pay attention to that; nor do they think of the glory of the saints. They do not desire at that time to be in glory. Their glory lies in being able some way to help the Crucified, especially when they see He is so offended and that few there are who, detached from everything else, really look after His honor.

7. It is true that sometimes these things are forgotten, and the loving desires to enjoy God and leave this exile return, especially when the soul sees how little it serves Him. But soon it turns and looks within itself and at how continually it ex-

periences His presence, and with that it is content and offers His Majesty the desire to live as the most costly offering it can give Him.

It has no more fear of death than it would of a gentle rapture. The fact is that He who gave those desires that were so excessive a torment, now gives these others. May He be always blessed and praised.

8. The desires these souls have are no longer for consolations or spiritual delight, since the Lord Himself is present with these souls and it is His Majesty who now lives. Clearly, His life was nothing but a continual torment, and He makes ours the same; at least with the desires, for in other things He leads us as the weak, although souls share much in His fortitude when He sees they have need of it.

There is a great detachment from everything and a desire to be always either alone or occupied in something that will benefit some soul. There are no interior trials or feelings of dryness, but the soul lives with a remembrance and tender love of our Lord. It would never want to go without praising Him. When it becomes distracted the Lord Himself awakens it in the manner mentioned,⁵ for one sees most clearly that that impulse, or I don't know what to call the feeling, proceeds from the interior depths of the soul, as was said of the impulses in the previous dwelling place.⁶ Here, in this dwelling place, these impulses are experienced most gently, but they do not proceed from the mind or the memory, nor do they come from anything that would make one think the soul did something on its own. This experience is an ordinary and frequent one, for it has been observed carefully. Just as a fire does not shoot its flames downward but upward, however great a fire is enkindled, so one experiences here that this interior movement proceeds from the center of the soul and awakens the faculties.

9. Certainly, if there were no other gain in this way of prayer except to understand the particular care God has in communicating with us and beseeching us to remain with Him—for this experience doesn't seem to be anything else—it seems to me that all the trials endured for the sake of enjoying

these touches of His love, so gentle and penetrating, would be well worthwhile.

This you will have experienced, Sisters. For I think that when one has reached the prayer of union the Lord goes about with this concern if we do not grow negligent in keeping His commandments. When this impulse comes to you, remember that it comes from this interior dwelling place where God is in our soul, and praise Him very much. For certainly that note or letter is His, written with intense love and in such a way that He wants you alone to understand it and what He asks of you in it. By no means should you fail to respond to His Majesty, even though you may be externally occupied or in conversation with some persons. For it will often happen that our Lord will want to grant you this secret favor in public, and it is very easy—since the response is interior—to do what I’m saying and make an act of love, or say what St. Paul said: *Lord, what will You have me do?*⁷ In many ways He will teach you there what will be pleasing to Him and the acceptable time. I think it is understood that He hears us, and this touch, which is so delicate, almost always disposes the soul to be able to do what was said with a resolute will.

10. The difference in this dwelling place is the one mentioned:⁸ There are almost never any experiences of dryness or interior disturbance of the kind that were present at times in all the other dwelling places, but the soul is almost always in quiet. There is no fear that this sublime favor can be counterfeited by the devil, but the soul is wholly sure that the favor comes from God; for, as I have said,⁹ the faculties and senses have nothing to do with what goes on in this dwelling place. His Majesty reveals Himself to the soul and brings it to Himself in that place where, in my opinion, the devil will not dare enter, nor will the Lord allow him to enter. Nor does the Lord in all the favors He grants the soul here, as I have said,¹⁰ receive any assistance from the soul itself, except what it has already done in surrendering itself totally to God.

11. Every way in which the Lord helps the soul here, and all He teaches it, takes place with such quiet and so noiselessly that, seemingly to me, the work resembles the building of

Solomon's temple where no sound was heard.¹¹ So in this temple of God, in this His dwelling place, He alone and the soul rejoice together in the deepest silence. There is no reason for the intellect to stir or seek anything, for the Lord who created it wishes to give it repose here and that through a small crevice it might observe what is taking place. At times this sight is lost and the other faculties do not allow the intellect to look, but this happens for only a very short time. In my opinion, the faculties are not lost here;¹² they do not work, but remain as though in amazement.

12. I am amazed as well to see that when the soul arrives here all raptures are taken away. Only once in a while are they experienced and then without those transports and that flight of the spirit. They happen very rarely and almost never in public as they very often did before. Nor do the great occasions of devotion cause the soul concern as previously. Nor, if souls in this dwelling place see a devout image or hear a sermon—previously it was almost as though they didn't hear it—or music, are they worried as was the poor little butterfly that went about so apprehensive that everything frightened it and made it fly. Now the reason could be that in this dwelling place either the soul has found its repose, or has seen so much that nothing frightens it, or that it doesn't feel that solitude it did before since it enjoys such company. In sum, Sisters, I don't know what the cause may be. For when the Lord begins to show what there is in this dwelling place and to bring the soul there, this great weakness is taken away. The weakness was a severe trial for the soul and previously was not taken away. Perhaps the reason is that the Lord has now fortified, enlarged, and made the soul capable. Or it could be that His Majesty wished to make known publicly that which He did with these souls in secret for certain reasons He knows, for His judgments are beyond all that we can imagine here below.

13. These effects, along with all the other good ones from the degrees of prayer we mentioned, are given by God when He brings the soul to Himself with this kiss sought by the bride,¹³ for I think this petition is here granted. Here an abundance of water is given to this deer that was wounded. Here one delights

in God's tabernacle. Here the dove Noah sent out to see if the storm was over finds the olive branch as a sign of firm ground discovered amid the floods and tempests of this world. O Jesus! Who would know the many things there must be in Scripture to explain this peace of soul! My God, since You see how important it is for us, grant that Christians will seek it; and in Your mercy do not take it away from those to whom You have given it. For, in the end, people must always live with fear until You give them true peace and bring them there where that peace will be unending. I say "true peace," not because this peace is not true but because the first war could return if we were to withdraw from God.

14. But what will these souls feel on seeing that they could lack so great a blessing? Seeing this makes them proceed more carefully and seek to draw strength from their weakness so as not to abandon through their own fault any opportunity to please God more. The more favored they are by His Majesty the more they are afraid and fearful of themselves. And since through His grandeurs they have come to a greater knowledge of their own miseries, and their sins become more serious to them, they often go about like the publican¹⁴ not daring to raise their eyes. At other times they go about desiring to die so as to be safe; although, with the love they have, soon they again want to live in order to serve Him, as was said.¹⁵ And in everything concerning themselves they trust in His mercy. Sometimes the many favors make them feel more annihilated, for they fear that just as a ship too heavily laden sinks to the bottom they will go down too.

15. I tell you, Sisters, that the cross is not wanting but it doesn't disquiet or make them lose peace. For the storms, like a wave, pass quickly. And the fair weather returns, because the presence of the Lord they experience makes them soon forget everything. May He be ever blessed and praised by all His creatures, amen.

Chapter 4

Concludes by explaining what she thinks our Lord's purpose is in granting such great favors to the soul and how it is necessary that Martha and Mary join together. This chapter is very beneficial.

YOU MUST NOT THINK, Sisters, that the effects I mentioned¹ are always present in these souls. Hence, where I remember, I say "ordinarily." For sometimes our Lord leaves these individuals in their natural state, and then it seems all the poisonous creatures from the outskirts and other dwelling places of this castle band together to take revenge for the time they were unable to have these souls under their control.

2. True, this natural state lasts only a short while, a day at most or a little more. And in this great disturbance, usually occasioned by some event, the soul's gain through the good company it is in becomes manifest. For the Lord gives the soul great stability and good resolutions not to deviate from His service in anything. But it seems this determination increases, and these souls do not deviate through even a very slight first movement. As I say this disturbance is rare, but our Lord does not want the soul to forget its being, so that, for one thing, it might always be humble; for another, that it might better understand the tremendous favor it receives, what it owes His Majesty, and that it might praise Him.

3. Nor should it pass through your minds that, since these souls have such determination and strong desires not to commit any imperfection for anything on earth, they fail to commit many imperfections, and even sins. Advertently, no; for the Lord must give souls such as these very particular help against such a thing. I mean venial sins, for from what these souls can understand they are free from mortal sins, although not immune. That they might have some sins they don't know about is no small torment to them. They also suffer torment in seeing souls go astray. Even though in some way they have great hope

that they themselves will not be among these souls, they cannot help but fear when they recall some of those persons Scripture mentions who, it seems, were favored by the Lord, like Solomon, who communed so much with His Majesty, as I have said.² The one among you who feels safest should fear more, for *blessed is the man who fears the Lord*,³ says David. May His Majesty protect us always. To beseech Him that we not offend Him is the greatest security we can have. May He be praised forever, amen.

4. It will be good, Sisters, to tell you the reason the Lord grants so many favors in this world. Although, if you have paid attention, you will have understood this in learning of their effects, I want to tell you again here lest someone think that the reason is solely for the sake of giving delight to these souls; that thought would be a serious error. His Majesty couldn't grant us a greater favor than to give us a life that would be an imitation of the life His beloved Son lived. Thus I hold for certain that these favors are meant to fortify our weakness, as I have said here at times,⁴ that we may be able to imitate Him in His great sufferings.

5. We have always seen that those who were closest to Christ our Lord were those with the greatest trials. Let us look at what His glorious Mother suffered and the glorious apostles. How do you think St. Paul could have suffered such very great trials? Through him we can see the effects visions and contemplation produce when from our Lord, and not from the imagination or the devil's deceit. Did St. Paul by chance hide himself in the enjoyment of these delights and not engage in anything else? You already see that he didn't have a day of rest, from what we can understand, and neither did he have any rest at night since it was then that he earned his livelihood.⁵ I like very much the account about St. Peter fleeing from prison and how our Lord appeared to him and told him "I am on my way to Rome to be crucified again." We never recite the office of this feast, where this account is, that I don't find particular consolation.⁶ How did this favor from the Lord impress St. Peter or what did he do? He went straight to his death. And it was no small mercy from the Lord that Peter found someone to provide him with death.

6. O my Sisters! How forgetful this soul, in which the Lord dwells in so particular a way, should be of its own rest, how little it should care for its honor, and how far it should be from wanting esteem in anything! For if it is with Him very much, as is right, it should think little about itself. All its concern is taken up with how to please Him more and how or where it will show Him the love it bears Him. This is the reason for prayer, my daughters, the purpose of this spiritual marriage: the birth always of good works, good works.

7. This is the true sign of a thing, or favor, being from God, as I have already told you.⁷ It benefits me little to be alone making acts of devotion to our Lord, proposing and promising to do wonders in His service, if I then go away and when the occasion offers itself do everything the opposite. I was wrong in saying it profits little, for everything having to do with God profits a great deal. And even though we are weak and do not carry out these resolutions afterward, sometimes His Majesty will give us the power to do so, even though, perhaps, doing so is burdensome to us, as is often true. Since He sees that a soul is very faint-hearted He gives it a severe trial, truly against its will, and brings this soul out of the trial with profit. Afterward, since the soul understands this, the fear lessens and one can offer oneself more willingly to Him. I meant "it benefits me little" in comparison with how much greater the benefit is when our deeds conform with what we say in prayer; what cannot be done all at once can be done little by little. Let the soul bend its will if it wishes that prayer be beneficial to it, for within the corners of these little monasteries there will not be lacking many occasions for you to do so.⁸

8. Keep in mind that I could not exaggerate the importance of this. Fix your eyes on the Crucified and everything will become small for you. If His Majesty showed us His love by means of such works and frightful torments, how is it you want to please Him only with words? Do you know what it means to be truly spiritual? It means becoming the slaves of God. Marked with His brand, which is that of the cross, spiritual persons, because now they have given Him their liberty, can be sold by Him as slaves of everyone, as He was. He doesn't

thereby do them any harm or grant them a small favor. And if souls aren't determined about becoming His slaves, let them be convinced that they are not making much progress, for this whole building, as I have said,⁹ has humility as its foundation. If humility is not genuinely present, for your own sake the Lord will not construct a high building lest that building fall to the ground. Thus, Sisters, that you might build on good foundations, strive to be the least and the slaves of all, looking at how or where you can please and serve them. What you do in this matter you do more for yourself than for them and lay stones so firmly that the castle will not fall.

9. I repeat, it is necessary that your foundation consist of more than prayer and contemplation. If you do not strive for the virtues and practice them, you will always be dwarfs. And, please God, it will be only a matter of not growing, for you already know that whoever does not increase decreases. I hold that love, where present, cannot possibly be content with remaining always the same.

10. It will seem to you that I am speaking with those who are beginning and that after this beginner's stage souls can rest. I have already told you¹⁰ that the calm these souls have interiorly is for the sake of their having much less calm exteriorly and much less desire to have exterior calm. What, do you think, is the reason for those inspirations (or to put it better, aspirations) I mentioned, and those messages the soul sends from the interior center to the people at the top of the castle and to the dwelling places outside the center where it is? Is it so that those outside might fall asleep? No, absolutely not! That the faculties, senses, and all the corporeal will not be idle, the soul wages more war from the center than it did when it was outside suffering with them, for then it didn't understand the tremendous gain trials bring. Perhaps they were the means by which God brought it to the center, and the company it has gives it much greater strength than ever. For if here below, as David says, in the company of the saints we will become saints,¹¹ there is no reason to doubt that, being united with the Strong One through so sovereign a union of spirit with spirit, fortitude will

cling to such a soul; and so we shall understand what fortitude the saints had for suffering and dying.

11. It is very certain that from that fortitude which clings to it there the soul assists all those who are in the castle, and even the body itself which often, seemingly, does not feel the strength. But the soul is fortified by the strength it has from drinking wine in this wine cellar, where its Spouse has brought it¹² and from where He doesn't allow it to leave; and strength flows back to the weak body, just as food placed in the stomach strengthens the head and the whole body. Thus the soul has its share of misfortune while it lives. However much it does, the interior strength increases and thus, too, the war that is waged; for everything seems like a trifle to it. The great penances that many saints—especially the glorious Magdalene, who had always been surrounded by so much luxury—performed must have come from this center. Also that hunger which our Father Elijah had for the honor of his God¹³ and which St. Dominic and St. Francis had so as to draw souls to praise God. I tell you, though they were forgetful of themselves, their suffering must have been great.

12. This is what I want us to strive for, my Sisters; and let us desire and be occupied in prayer not for the sake of our enjoyment but so as to have this strength to serve. Let's refuse to take an unfamiliar path, for we shall get lost at the most opportune time. It would indeed be novel to think of having these favors from God through a path other than the one He took and the one followed by all His saints. May the thought never enter our minds. Believe me, Martha and Mary must join together in order to show hospitality to the Lord and have Him always present and not host Him badly by failing to give Him something to eat. How would Mary, always seated at His feet, provide Him with food if her sister did not help her? His food is that in every way possible we draw souls that they may be saved and praise Him always.¹⁴

13. You will make two objections: one, that He said that Mary had chosen the better part. The answer is that she had already performed the task of Martha, pleasing the Lord by washing His feet and drying them with her hair.¹⁵ Do you think

it would be a small mortification for a woman of nobility like her to wander through these streets (and perhaps alone because her fervent love made her unaware of what she was doing) and enter a house she had never entered before and afterward suffer the criticism of the Pharisee and the very many other things she must have suffered? The people saw a woman like her change so much—and, as we know, she was among such malicious people—and they saw her friendship with the Lord whom they vehemently abhorred, and that she wanted to become a saint since obviously she would have changed her manner of dress and everything else. All of that was enough to cause them to comment on the life she had formerly lived. If nowadays there is so much gossip against persons who are not so notorious; what would have been said then? I tell you, Sisters, the better part came after many trials and much mortification, for even if there were no other trial than to see His Majesty abhorred, that would be an intolerable one. Moreover, the many trials that afterward she suffered at the death of the Lord and in the years that she subsequently lived in His absence must have been a terrible torment. You see she wasn't always in the delight of contemplation at the feet of the Lord.

14. The other objection you will make is that you are unable to bring souls to God, that you do not have the means; that you would do it willingly but that not being teachers or preachers, as were the apostles, you do not know how. This objection I have answered at times in writing, but I don't know if I did so in this *Castle*.¹⁶ Yet since the matter is something I believe is passing through your minds on account of the desires God gives you I will not fail to respond here. I already told you elsewhere¹⁷ that sometimes the devil gives us great desires so that we will avoid setting ourselves to the task at hand, serving our Lord in possible things, and instead be content with having desired the impossible. Apart from the fact that by prayer you will be helping greatly, you need not be desiring to benefit the whole world but must concentrate on those who are in your company, and thus your deed will be greater since you are more obliged toward them. Do you think such deep humility, your mortification, service of all and great charity toward

them, and love of the Lord is of little benefit? This fire of love in you enkindles their souls, and with every other virtue you will be always awakening them. Such service will not be small but very great and very pleasing to the Lord. By what you do in deed—that which you can—His Majesty will understand that you would do much more. Thus He will give you the reward He would if you had gained many souls for Him.

15. You will say that such service does not convert souls because all the Sisters you deal with are already good. Who has appointed you judge in this matter? The better they are the more pleasing their praises will be to our Lord and the more their prayer will profit their neighbor.

In sum, my Sisters, what I conclude with is that we shouldn't build castles in the air. The Lord doesn't look so much at the greatness of our works as at the love with which they are done. And if we do what we can, His Majesty will enable us each day to do more and more, provided that we do not quickly tire. But during the little while this life lasts—and perhaps it will last a shorter time than each one thinks—let us offer the Lord interiorly and exteriorly the sacrifice we can. His Majesty will join it with that which He offered on the cross to the Father for us. Thus even though our works are small they will have the value our love for Him would have merited had they been great.

16. May it please His Majesty, my Sisters and daughters, that we all reach that place where we may ever praise Him. Through the merits of His Son who lives and reigns forever and ever, may He give me the grace to carry out something of what I tell you, amen. For I tell you that my confusion is great, and thus I ask you through the same Lord that in your prayers you do not forget this poor wretch.

[*Epilogue*¹]

JHS.

ALTHOUGH WHEN I BEGAN writing this book I am sending you I did so with the aversion I mentioned in the beginning,² now that I am finished I admit the work has brought me much happiness, and I consider the labor, though I confess it was small, well spent. Considering the strict enclosure and the few things you have for your entertainment, my Sisters, and that your buildings are not always as large as would be fitting for your monasteries, I think it will be a consolation for you to delight in this interior castle since without permission from the prioress you can enter and take a walk through it at any time.

2. True, you will not be able to enter all the dwelling places through your own efforts, even though these efforts may seem to you great, unless the Lord of the castle Himself brings you there. Hence I advise you to use no force if you meet with any resistance, for you will thereby anger Him in such a way that He will never allow you to enter them. He is very fond of humility. By considering that you do not deserve even to enter the third you will more quickly win the favor to reach the fifth. And you will be able to serve Him from there in such a way, continuing to walk through them often, that He will bring you into the very dwelling place He has for Himself. You need never leave this latter dwelling place unless called by the prioress, whose will this great Lord desires that you comply with as much as if it were His own. Even though you are frequently outside through her command, you will always find the door open when you return. Once you get used to enjoying this

castle, you will find rest in all things, even those involving much labor, for you will have the hope of returning to the castle which no one can take from you.

3. Although no more than seven dwelling places were discussed, in each of these there are many others, below and above and to the sides, with lovely gardens and fountains and labyrinths, such delightful things that you would want to be dissolved in praises of the great God who created the soul in His own image and likeness.³ If you find something good in the way I have explained this to you, believe that indeed His Majesty said it so as to make you happy; the bad that you might find is said by me.

4. Through the strong desire I have to play some part in helping you serve my God and Lord, I ask that each time you read this work you, in my name, praise His Majesty fervently and ask for the increase of His Church and for light for the Lutherans. As for me, ask Him to pardon my sins and deliver me from purgatory, for perhaps by the mercy of God I will be there when this is given you to read—if it may be seen by you after having been examined by learned men. If anything is erroneous it is so because I didn't know otherwise; and I submit in everything to what the holy Roman Catholic Church holds, for in this Church I live, declare my faith, and promise to live and die.

May God our Lord be forever praised and blessed, amen, amen.

5. This writing was finished in the monastery of St. Joseph of Avila in the year 1577, the eve before the feast of St. Andrew,⁴ for the glory of God who lives and reigns forever and ever, amen.

Notes

NOTES

THE WAY OF PERFECTION

INTRODUCTION

1. See *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, tr. K. Kavanaugh and O. Rodriguez, vol. 1 (I.C.S. Publications: Washington, D.C., 1976), pp. 17-19.
2. See *Life*, epilogue, no. 2.
3. See *Way of Perfection*, ch. 42, no. 6.
4. Ibid., prologue, no. 1.
5. See *ibid.*, ch. 16, nos. 3-6; ch. 24, nos. 1-2; ch. 30, no. 7.
6. Ibid., prologue, no. 1.
7. Ibid., ch. 15, no. 1.
8. Ibid., ch. 42, no. 6.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., prologue, no. 1.
11. See *Camino de Perfección, Reproducción en facsímil del autógrafo de Valladolid*, ed. Tomás de la Cruz et al., vol. 2 (Tipografía Poliglotta Vaticana: Rome, 1965), pp. 15-30.
12. See *ibid.*
13. Ibid., ch. 16, no. 6.
14. See *Life*, ch. 39, no. 22.
15. Ibid., ch. 38, no. 6.
16. See *ibid.*, ch. 20, no. 13.
17. *Way of Perfection*, ch. 1, no. 2.
18. Cf. *ibid.*, ch. 1, nos. 2, 5; ch. 3, nos. 1, 8; ch. 35, no. 3.
19. *Life*, ch. 25, no. 12.
20. Ibid., ch. 25, no. 13.
21. *Spiritual Testimonies*, 3, no. 13.
22. Cf. *Way of Perfection*, ch. 21, no. 10; ch. 30, no. 4.
23. Ibid., ch. 3, no. 9.
24. Ibid., ch. 1, no. 2.
25. Ibid., ch. 3, no. 1.
26. Ibid., ch. 1, no. 2.
27. Ibid. For further details about Teresa and the Church, see Tomás de la Cruz, "Santa Teresa De Avila Hija De La Iglesia," *Ephemerides Carmeliticae* 17 (1966): 305-367.

28. For further information about these times, see my introduction to the *Life* in the *Collected Works of St. Teresa*, vol.1, pp. 6-22.
29. Francisco de Osuna, *Norte de Estados* (Seville, 1531), as quoted by D. De Pablo Maroto in *Dinámica de la Oración* (Madrid: Espiritualidad, 1973), p. 109.
30. See *Biblioteca Mística Carmelitana*, ed., Silverio de Santa Teresa, vol. 18 (Burgos: El Monte Carmelo 1934), p. 10.
31. *Obras Completas de Santa Teresa de Jesús*, ed., Efrén de La Madre de Dios and O. Steggink (Madrid: BAC, 1967), p. 190.
32. *Way of Perfection*, ch. 3, no. 7.
33. See J. Ignacio Tellechea Idígoras, "Textos Inéditos Sobre El Fenomeno De Los Alumbrados," *Ephemerides Carmeliticae* 13 (1962): 768-774.
34. See P. Tommaso della Croce, "Santa Teresa E I Movimenti Spirituali Del Suo Tempo," *Santa Teresa Maestra De Orazione* (Rome: Teresianum, 1963), pp. 30-36. Cf. D. De Pablo Maroto, *Dinámica De La Oración*, p. 106.
35. See *Life*, ch. 26, no. 5.
36. See D. De Pablo Maroto, *Dinámica De La Oración*, p. 107.
37. *Way of Perfection*, ch. 21, no. 2
38. *Ibid.*, ch. 22, no. 2.
39. *Ibid.*, ch. 21, no. 8.
40. *Camino de Perfección, Reproducción en facsímil del autógrafo de Valladolid*, vol. 2, p. 76.
41. *Way of Perfection*, ch. 3, no. 7
42. See *ibid.*
43. See *ibid.*, ch. 11, no. 4.
44. Cf. *Rule of St. Albert*, eds. H. Clarke and B. Edwards (Aylesford: Carmelite Priory, 1973).
45. *Way of Perfection*, ch. 13, no. 6.
46. *Ibid.*, ch. 4, no. 9.
47. For a glimpse of life at the Incarnation, see P. Tomás Alvarez, "La visita del padre Rubeo a las carmelitas de La Encarnación de Avila (1567)," *Monte Carmelo* 86 (1978): 5-25. Cf. also D. De Pablo Maroto, "Camino De Perfección," *Introducción A La Lectura De Santa Teresa* (Madrid: Espiritualidad, 1978): 285-288.
48. *Way of Perfection*, ch. 27, no. 6.
49. *Ibid.*, ch. 2, no. 8.
50. *Ibid.*, no. 6.
51. *Ibid.*, ch. 4, no. 7.
52. See *ibid.*, ch. 1, no. 2.

53. See *ibid.*, ch. 4, nos. 1-2.
54. See *ibid.*, no. 4.
55. *Ibid.*, prologue, no. 2.
56. See *ibid.*, ch. 4, no. 12, note 8.
57. *Ibid.*, ch. 41, no. 5.
58. *Ibid.*, ch. 2, no. 8, note 4.
59. *Ibid.*, ch. 7, no. 5.
60. *Ibid.*, ch. 10, no. 2.
61. See *ibid.*, ch. 11, no. 3.
62. *Ibid.*, ch. 12, no. 5.
63. *Ibid.*, ch. 13, no. 5, note 2.
64. *Ibid.*, ch. 10, no. 3.
65. *Ibid.*, ch. 16, no. 2.
66. *Ibid.*, ch. 39, no. 2.
67. *Ibid.*, ch. 38, no. 7.
68. *Ibid.*, ch. 19, no. 1.
69. *Ibid.*, ch. 19, no. 2.
70. *Ibid.*
71. *Ibid.*, ch. 28, no. 4.
72. *Ibid.*, ch. 29, no. 5.
73. *Ibid.*, ch. 26, no. 3.
74. *Ibid.*, ch. 29, no. 5.
75. *Ibid.*, ch. 26, no. 3.
76. See *ibid.*, ch. 29, no. 4.
77. *Ibid.*, ch. 28, no. 7.
78. *Ibid.*, no. 4.
79. *Ibid.*, ch. 29, no. 7.
80. *Ibid.*, no. 6.
81. See *ibid.*, ch. 26, nos. 4, 5, 8.
82. *Ibid.*, ch. 30, nos. 6-7.
83. *Ibid.*, ch. 31, no. 6.
84. *Ibid.*, ch. 42, no. 5.
85. *Ibid.*, ch. 21, no. 2.

FOREWORD

1. Although St. Joseph's in Avila was founded by Teresa, she was not the first prioress. The first prioress was an older nun from the Incarnation, Ana de San Juan (Dávila), who was severe with Teresa, mortifying and humiliating her. After a short while this nun returned to the Incarnation because of bad health, and Teresa, near the beginning of March, 1563, was appointed prioress. She remained so until 1568, and certainly held office while writing this book.

2. This declaration of submission to the Roman Church was written later by Teresa in the copy of Toledo, which was sent for publication in 1579 to Don Teotonio de Braganza, archbishop of Evora.

PROLOGUE

1. An academic title, the equivalent of licentiate.
2. According to Teresa, Fr. Báñez was her confessor for six years, approximately from 1562 to 1568 (see *Spir. Test.*, 58, no. 8).
3. A reference to her *Life*, the second redaction of which was finished at St. Joseph's in Avila toward the end of 1565, before she started *The Way of Perfection*.

CHAPTER 2

1. Allusion to Lk. 21:33.
2. Here Teresa alludes to the social attitude in sixteenth-century Spain in which honor was reserved for people of the upper class or nobility. According to Philip II's *Pragmática*, titles were to be used only by the nobility. Poor people had no right to titles, and so were not honored or esteemed.
3. Teresa might have read such words, attributed to St. Clare, in St. Bonaventure's *Leyenda mayor de S. Francisco y S. Clara* (Toledo, 1526).
4. In the first redaction she wrote more emphatically: "... may such a building fall to the ground and kill you all the day you desire one. Moreover, I say this without remorse, and I'll beg it of God."
5. In the mind of Teresa the number of nuns in each community should be small. In 1561 she thought of fifteen (see *Letters*, to Lorenzo de Cepeda, Dec. 12, 1561). Later she spoke of thirteen (see *Life*, ch. 32, no. 13), that is, twelve nuns, representing the number of apostles, and the prioress, standing in the place of Christ. Initially, the monastery of the Incarnation at Avila was to have only fourteen nuns, twelve for the apostles, and two others for our Lord and our Lady. When Teresa, following that early tradition of the Incarnation, added the fifteenth it was to recall St. Joseph. In 1576, Fr. Gratian, as the apostolic commissary, established in accord with Teresa that there be thirteen or fourteen nuns, excluding the lay Sisters, in houses founded in poverty and twenty in those having an income. See *Biblioteca Mística Carmelitana*, ed. P. Silverio de Santa Teresa, O.C.D., 20 vols. (Burgos: El Monte Carmelo, 1915-35), 6:525 (hereafter cited as BMC).

CHAPTER 3

1. Namely, the two mentioned in the preceding paragraph, wherein is contained the apostolic element of the Teresian charism.
2. This paragraph was deleted in the first redaction by Fr. García de Toledo, who thought it was too daring for the attitude toward women that was characteristic of the times. Teresa complied and omitted the passage in the second redaction. Nevertheless, it is a stirring statement in favor of women and of what they can contribute to the Church and the world.
3. Lk. 9:58.
4. A reference to the Bishop of Avila, Don Alvaro de Mendoza (see *Life*, ch. 33, no. 16). In the Toledo manuscript she added in her own hand: "... and this order of the Blessed Virgin, and all the other orders."

CHAPTER 4

1. In the autograph (Valladolid) this chapter was divided so that a new chapter began after no. 4. Teresa decided to join them when preparing the copy of Toledo for printing. The chapter heading consists of what originally had been two different headings.
2. The rule states: "Each one of you is to stay in his own cell or nearby, pondering the Lord's law day and night and keeping watch at his prayers unless attending to some other duty." See *The Rule of St. Albert*, eds. H. Clarke, O. Carm. and B. Edwards, O.C.D. (Aylesford: Carmelite Priory, 1973), p.83.
3. See ch. 2, note 5.
4. This strong expression is a kind of Teresian anathema indicating a serious and contagious moral evil. See no. 8.
5. Biblical allusion to 1 P. 1:18-19.
6. See note 2.
7. Jn. 13:34.
8. Teresa was not satisfied with the way she wrote in her first redaction about this second type of love; in her second redaction she rewrote this part. But then she tore out the whole sheet and wrote what is contained in no. 13. The following is what she wrote in her first redaction: "... the other is spiritual and mixed with it our own sensuality and weakness. The important thing is that these two kinds of love are unaffected by any passion, for where passion is present the good order is thrown into complete

disorder. And if we love discreetly and moderately with the love I mentioned, all will be meritorious, for what seems to us to be sensuality will be converted into virtue. But the sensuality is so intermingled with the spiritual love that at times there is no one who understands this love, especially if it is for some confessor. For if persons who practice prayer see that he is holy and understands their mode of procedure, they will get to love him deeply. And here the devil batters one with scruples that disturb the soul very much, which is what the devil wants to do. If, especially, the confessor is leading the soul to higher perfection, the devil afflicts it so much that it abandons the confessor. And neither if it goes to another confessor nor again to another does the devil cease to torment it with that temptation.

What souls can do in this situation is to try not to think about whether they love the confessor or don't love him; but if they do love him, let them love him. For since we experience love for one who takes care of our bodies, shouldn't we also love one who always strives and works to care for our souls? Rather, I hold that a great principle for making much progress is to love the confessor, if he is holy and spiritual and if I see that he is diligent about my soul's progress. For our weakness is such that sometimes this love helps us very much to perform great deeds in the service of God. If the love is not of this kind, as I have said, there is danger; and the mere fact that he knows he is loved can do very serious harm, and in houses where there is a great deal of enclosure much more than in others. Because it is difficult to know which confessor is so good, there is need for much caution and prudence. The best advice is that the confessor not know that there is such affection and that no one tell him there is. But the devil so urges the soul to tell the confessor about this love that such advice becomes useless. It seems to the soul that all it has to confess is this affection and that it is obliged to confess it. For this reason I would like the Sisters to realize that this love doesn't amount to anything and pay no attention to it.

Let them take this counsel: if they know that the confessor directs all his words to the profit of their souls and they do not see or know of any other vanity (for this is soon understood by anyone who doesn't want to become a fool), and they know that he is God-fearing, they should not weary themselves over any temptation they may have about their great attachment; when the devil is worn out he will go away. But if they should become aware that the confessor is turning toward some vanity in what

he says to them, they should be suspicious about it all and in no way carry on conversations with him even though these may concern prayer or God; but they should make their confession briefly and bring it to a conclusion. And it would be best to tell the Mother prioress that your soul doesn't get on well with him and change confessors. That would be the most proper thing to do, if there is the opportunity to do so, and I hope in God there will be. And you should do what you can to avoid speaking with him—even suffer death.”

9. In no. 14.

CHAPTER 5

1. It is worth noting that this Teresian teaching on freedom for cloistered nuns with regard to confessors was later accepted by Church law.
2. The first redaction has a somewhat different slant: “Let her always try to speak to someone with learning; and her nuns should do so as well. May God deliver them from being ruled in everything by the confessor if he is not learned, no matter how spiritual he may seem to be or in fact is.”
3. In her *Life* Teresa mentions several instances in which she received bad counsel: ch. 4, no. 7; ch. 5, no. 3; ch. 6, no. 4; ch. 8, no. 11; ch. 26, no. 3.
4. The first redaction continues: “And do not take away their freedom to confess at times with learned men and to discuss their prayer with them even though there are confessors. For many reasons I know that this is fitting and that the harm that might arise is nothing in comparison with the deception and great harm, almost without remedy, so to speak, that comes with the opposite practice. For what happens in monasteries is that good soon suffers a decline if it is not preserved with great care, and evil once it gets started is extremely difficult to get rid of because very quickly the custom becomes a habit and imperfections become natural.”
5. In Teresa's time the vicar of a cloistered monastery of nuns was a priest appointed by the local bishop or provincial with special instructions concerning the government of the monastery.
6. The first redaction continues, with insistence: “For as I have said, after everything was considered, grave reasons were found for deciding that this was the best course of action, that is: that the chaplain, if there be one, serve as the ordinary confessor and that when a soul feels the need, confession may be made to per-

sons like the ones mentioned. These may be named by the bishop, or if the Mother prioress is such that the bishop entrusts this task to her, she may name them on her own. Since there are few nuns, they will take little of anyone's time. This practice was decided upon after much prayer by many persons including myself—although wretched—and among many persons of great learning, intelligence, and prayer. So I hope in the Lord it is the most fitting thing to do.

7. The reason the first monastery founded by Teresa was subject to the jurisdiction of the local bishop at Avila can be found in her *Life*, ch. 33, no. 16. See also the original petition to the Holy See in the latter part of 1561 as well as the brief "ex parte vestra" (Feb. 7, 1562) in *Monumenta Historica Carmeli Teresiani*, ed., *Institutum Historicum Teresianum* (Rome: Teresianum, 1973—), 1:5, 10.

CHAPTER 6

1. See ch. 4, no. 12. She intended to explain two kinds of love: one, purely spiritual; the other, mixed. She continues here the topic of purely spiritual love.

CHAPTER 7

1. See ch. 6, nos. 6, 9.
2. See ch. 6, no. 9.
3. In no. 4.
4. See ch. 2, note 5.
5. The first redaction concludes in the following way: "Because I shall treat of this elsewhere, I'll say no more about it here, except that even though your love may not be as perfect as that just mentioned, provided that it goes out toward all in general, I would rather you love one another with tenderness and delight than that there be a moment of discord. May the Lord not permit such discord because of who His Majesty is. Amen."

CHAPTER 8

1. See ch. 2, note 5.
2. Our Lord called Teresa from the monastery of the Incarnation in Avila where there were more than 180 nuns to found the little monastery of St. Joseph where the number was lowered to thirteen.

CHAPTER 9

1. In no. 2.

CHAPTER 10

1. Allusion to Ex. 16; Wis. 16:20.
2. The first redaction puts it more strongly: “Sometimes they feel a frenzy for doing penance without rhyme or reason, a frenzy that lasts only a couple of days, so to speak. Subsequently, the devil makes them imagine that the penances did them harm. No more penance! Not even, after some attempts, what the order commands.”

CHAPTER 12

1. In ch. 11, no. 5.
2. See ch. 11, no. 4.
3. See no. 1; ch. 11, no. 5.
4. The first redaction adds: “Perform some public mortification also since they are practiced in this house. Flee these temptations of the devil as you would a plague, and don’t allow him to stay with you.”
5. In no. 6.
6. Jb. 2:9-13.

CHAPTER 13

1. Allusion to Lk. 1:48-52; 14:11.
2. The first redaction goes on at greater length and is put more strongly: “Oh, what a great act of charity and what a great service to God a nun would perform if when she sees that she cannot follow the practices of perfection and customs of this house she would recognize the fact and go, and leave the others in peace! And they shouldn’t keep her in any of the monasteries—at least if they believe me—nor allow her to make profession until after many years of trial to see if she makes amends. I am not referring to failures in the penance and fasts. Even though these are faults, such failures are not things that cause so much harm. But I am speaking about persons who by temperament like to be esteemed and honored and who look at the faults of others and never at their own, and other similar things that truly arise from lack of humility. If God doesn’t favor her with a great spiritual gift and if after many years you don’t see her make amends, may He free you so that she doesn’t remain in your company. Realize that she won’t be at peace nor will she allow anyone else to be. Since you do not accept a dowry, God grants you the freedom to send a nun away. What I pity about monasteries is that often, so as not to return the money, they allow the thief to steal the treasure from them, or they do so for the sake of the relatives’ honor. In

this house you have risked and lost the honor of this world, for the poor receive no honor. Don't desire that others have it at such a cost to yourselves. Our honor, Sisters, must be to serve God. If someone becomes a hindrance to your doing this, she should remain at home with her honor. For this reason our fathers ordained a one-year probation, and in our order we have the faculty to delay the profession for four years. And in this house I would like to delay it even ten years. A humble nun will not mind a delay of profession. She already knows that if she is good they will not dismiss her; if she is not good, why does she desire to do harm to this college of Christ? In saying 'not good,' I am not speaking of some vanity; for, with God's help, I hope such a thing will stay far from this house. In saying 'not good,' I mean not being mortified but being attached to worldly things or to oneself in the matters I have mentioned. And the nun who doesn't see much detachment in herself should believe me and not make profession, if she doesn't want to have a hell here below. And please God she will not have another in the next life, for there are many things in her that could cause such a misfortune; and perhaps those in the house will not understand them, nor perhaps will she, as I have understood them."

CHAPTER 14

1. In sixteenth-century Spain only the first-born male was entitled to the inheritance. Convent life, as a result, provided a secure future for many girls, and they often entered a monastery without a vocation.

CHAPTER 15

1. See ch. 11, no. 5; ch. 16, nos. 1-2.
2. The first redaction goes on in greater detail: "These false accusations, no matter how serious, did not disturb me. But in little things I followed my nature — and continue to follow it — without paying attention to what is more perfect. Hence I would like each of you to begin early to understand and reflect upon the much that is gained through all the various ways, and that no one, in my opinion, loses by following any of them. The main thing gained is that in some manner we follow the Lord. I say 'in some manner,' because, as I have mentioned, we are never blamed without our having faults."
3. Allusion to Prv. 24:16; 1 Jn. 1:8-10.
4. 1 Cor. 14:34.

5. Lk. 7:36-40; 10:38. Mary Magdalene, the repentant sinner, and Mary of Bethany were generally in Teresa's surroundings thought to be the same person.
6. Lk. 23:41.

CHAPTER 16

1. The first four paragraphs constituted a separate chapter in the first redaction under the heading: "Treats of how necessary it was to mention the things above in order to begin explaining prayer." Teresa copied the four paragraphs in her second redaction but then tore them out, perhaps after having had second thoughts about the advisability of using a "vanity" like the game of chess as an example. After tearing out this short chapter she failed to revise the numbering; thus, a number is missed in the enumeration of the chapters. This chapter 16, then, of the second redaction begins with the fifth paragraph, or number 5. But all editors, from Luis de León to those of the present day, have included these delightful paragraphs in which the chess game provides Teresa with an opportunity for some profound insights and illustrations.
2. These virtues are humility and keeping silent when falsely accused. See ch. 15, nos. 2-3.
3. Allusion to Sg. 4:9.
4. See *Life*, ch. 8, no. 4.
5. The first redaction contains some important differences: "It often happens that the Lord favors a soul that is in a very wretched state. It should be understood that it is not then in mortal sin, in my opinion. God will permit someone who is in mortal sin to see a vision—even a very good one—so as to bring that person back to Himself. But I cannot believe that He would place such a person in contemplation. For in that divine union the Lord delights in the soul and the soul in Him. It's incongruous that the purity of heaven would delight in a soul stained with sin or that the delight of the angels would find comfort in what is not His. Now we know that by sinning mortally a soul belongs to the devil; it can delight in him since it has satisfied him, and we already know that his delights are a continual torment even in this life. The Lord will always have devoted sons in whom He can be consoled. He has no need to go about taking those who do not belong to Him, although His Majesty will do what He often does: snatch them from the devil's hands."
6. See Mt. 4:5.

7. In the first redaction Teresa wrote and then crossed out the following: "...and how well he deserved on account of his boldness that God should create a new hell for him."
8. In no. 6.
9. Allusion to Mt. 21:3.
10. See Ep. 6:9; Ac. 10:34.
11. In no. 6.

CHAPTER 17

1. The monastery of St. Joseph in Avila.
2. In ch. 12, nos. 6-7.
3. Lk. 14:10.
4. In ch. 5, no. 5.
5. The first redaction is more explicit: "I know an elderly nun—please God my life were as good as hers—who is very holy and penitential. She is a great nun and recites much vocal and very ordinary prayer."
6. See *Life*, ch. 15, no. 14; ch. 17, no. 3; ch. 20, nos. 7, 29.
7. Lk. 10:38-40.
8. Allusion to Lk. 10:41-42.
9. In no. 2.

CHAPTER 18

1. Allusion to Lk. 10:42, of which she spoke in ch. 17, no. 5.
2. The first redaction is more strongly worded: "And how much better is the pay than that of those who serve the king! The poor soldiers are continuously in danger of death, and then only God knows how they are paid." Some authors think this passage reveals Teresa's worries about her brothers who were among the conquistadors.
3. In ch. 30, no. 7.
4. In chapter one of her *Constitutions*, Teresa sets aside two hours daily for mental prayer in common, one in the morning and one in the evening.
5. In the first redaction the military metaphor is preserved: "You don't know when the captain will call you and give you more work, disguised in delight. If he doesn't, you should understand that you are not suited for it and that such a situation is what is fitting for you."
6. Allusion to Mt. 25:1-13.
7. See no. 4 and ch. 17, no. 6.
8. Allusion to Mt. 20:22.

CHAPTER 19

1. She no doubt has in mind the very popular book by Fray Luis de Granada, O.P., *Libro de Oración y Meditación*, published in Salamanca in 1554 and included in the brief list of books she recommended for the library of each of her convents. See *Constitutions*, ch. 2.
2. Jn. 4:14.
3. Allusion to Sg. 8:7.
4. See Ps. 8:7. The censor, disagreeing with Teresa's interpretation, crossed out this section and noted in the margin: "This is not the meaning of the scriptural passage; it refers to Christ and to Adam as he was in the state of innocence."
5. In ch. 16, nos. 6-13.
6. Note that for Teresa the "living water" refers to contemplation, in contrast to the "muddy water" which refers to discursive prayer.
7. She is speaking of herself. See *Life*, ch. 20; *Spir. Test.*, 1. The first redaction reads as follows: "So great was her thirst, so much was her desire increasing that she understood clearly it would have been possible to die of love if the raptures hadn't soothed the thirst. Blessed be He who in His Gospel invites us to drink! Thus, since in our Lord and our Good there cannot be anything imperfect, He gives us what we need; it belongs to Him alone to give us this water."
8. In no. 8.
9. See Ph. 1:23.
10. This account can be found in Cassian's *Conferences*. See Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, gen. ed., *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series Two, 14 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), vol. 11: *The Second Conference of Abbot Moses*, p. 310. Most probably Teresa knew of this story from the *Vida de los Santos Padres* published in Zaragoza, 1511. In the process of beatification Petronila Bautista tells of Teresa's enthusiasm for the conferences of Cassian. "She was very devoted to the *Conferences* of Cassian and of the Fathers of the Desert, and so when this witness was with her the Holy Mother asked her to read two or three accounts of those saints each day and at night tell her about them since she herself didn't have the time to do so because of her just and holy occupations . . ." BMC, 19:591.
11. In no. 2.
12. This quotation probably amounts to a combination of Jn. 7:37 and Mt. 11:28.

CHAPTER 20

1. In ch. 17, no. 2.
2. Allusion to Jn. 14:2.
3. Allusion to Pr. 1:20; Jn. 7:37.

CHAPTER 21

1. She returns to the theme she began to deal with in ch. 19, nos. 1-2.
2. Allusion to Jn. 4:14.
3. In the first redaction she refers to certain books she had read: "...and although I have read in some books, and even in several, how good it is to begin with such an attitude, nothing will be lost, in my opinion, by mentioning it here."
4. A reference to ch. 19, no. 2.
5. In the first redaction she refers to her *Life*: "I will deal only briefly with the more sublime things, for, as I say, I have already written about them."

The last line of the text alludes to the prohibition in 1559 by the Inquisitor, Don Fernando Valdés, of spiritual books written in the vernacular. See *Life*, ch. 26, no. 5; also below, note 8 and ch. 38, no. 1.

6. In the beginning she had the intention of writing about both the Our Father and the Hail Mary. See ch. 24, no. 2; ch. 42, no. 4.
7. Mt. 11:12.
8. A new reference to the matter mentioned in note 5 of this chapter. One of the censors objected to the statement by commenting in the margin: "It seems here that she is reprimanding the Inquisitors who prohibited books on prayer." Teresa excluded the sentence from her second redaction and crossed it out in her first redaction.
9. In no. 5.
10. "Each of you is to remain in his cell or nearby day and night meditating on the law of the Lord and watching in prayer..." See *The Rule of Saint Albert*, Eds. H. Clarke, O. Carm. and B. Edwards, O.C.D. (Aylesford: Carmelite Priory, 1973), pp. 82-83.

CHAPTER 22

1. In her visit to Doña Luisa de la Cerda. See *Life*, ch. 34.
2. The first redaction adds: "For, though being what I am, I would like to shout and argue with those who say mental prayer is not necessary."

3. The first redaction concludes: "Don't let anyone frighten you with these fears. Praise God, for He is all powerful and will not let them take mental prayer away from you. On the contrary, anyone who cannot pray vocally with this attention should realize that he isn't fulfilling his obligation. He must strive for this attention with every effort — if he wants to pray with perfection — under pain of not doing what is required of the bride of so great a King. Beg Him, daughters, to give me the grace to do what I am counseling you to do, for I fail very much in this matter. May His Majesty provide because of who He is."

CHAPTER 23

1. Allusion to Jn. 4:14.
2. In ch. 19, no. 15.
3. Allusion to Mt. 19:29.
4. Lk. 11:9.
5. The first redaction concludes as follows: "This is absolutely true; I know it is so. If they don't find this is true, they shouldn't believe me in anything I say. Sisters, you already know it through experience; and, through the goodness of God, I can present you as witnesses. What has been said is good for those who are to come."

CHAPTER 24

1. She takes up once more the subject mentioned in ch. 19, no. 2 and also in ch. 21, no. 3.
2. In ch. 5, no. 5; ch. 17, no. 2; ch. 20, no. 1. See also *Life*, ch. 13, no. 13; ch. 22, no. 2; *Interior Castle*, VI, ch. 7, no. 12; *Foundations*, ch. 5, no. 1.
3. Mt. 6:6.
4. Allusion to Lk. 6:12.
5. In ch. 22, no. 8.

CHAPTER 25

1. A reference to *The Book of Her Life*. See also above, prol., no. 4. In the *Life* she explains at length the nature of contemplation. See chs. 14-21 and chs. 22-31. See especially ch. 14, nos. 2, 6; ch. 18, no. 14.
2. In the first redaction this number reads quite differently: "It is all explained well in the book I mentioned I wrote, and thus there is no reason to deal with it here in any particular way. There, I said everything I knew. If God brings any among you to

this state of contemplation—for, as I said, some of you are in it—you should strive to obtain that book after I die; it will mean a lot to you. Those of you who are not in this state will have no reason to do anything but struggle to carry out what is mentioned in this book I'm writing now, to make progress in as many ways as you can, and to use diligence; for the Lord will grant you the ability to do these things if you beg Him for it and adopt the proper measures. As for the rest, the Lord Himself will give it and not deny it to anyone who reaches the end of the journey by fighting as has been said."

CHAPTER 26

1. In ch. 24, no. 2.
2. Sg. 2:14.
3. Allusion to Ru. 1:15.
4. The first redaction reads: "...grow accustomed to recalling that the Lord is present within you and to speaking with Him often..."

CHAPTER 27

1. Mt. 6:9.
2. The expressions "to enter within itself" and "to rise above itself" were current among writers of the time. As used here, the first refers to the act of interior recollection; the second to mystical prayer. In other places Teresa criticizes the theory which urges the soul to rise above itself through its own efforts. See *Life*, ch. 22, nos. 1-7; *Interior Castle*, IV, ch. 3, nos. 2,6.
3. Allusion to Mt. 24:35; Mk. 13:31; Lk. 21:33.
4. Allusion to Lk. 15:11-32.
5. Allusion to Ep. 3:15; 2 P. 1:4.
6. Allusion to Jn. 17:21; 10:30; 8:29.
7. One of the censors wrote in the margin: "I don't know where she got this." She could have read it in the *Flos Sanctorum* of her time. From the etymology *Bar-tholomaeus*, son of Ptolemaeus, it was deduced that the Apostle was a descendant of the Ptolemies.
8. The first redaction reads: "And if something of this attitude is present in one of the nuns, don't consent to having her in the house; she is a Judas among the apostles. Do all you can to free yourselves from such bad company. And if you cannot do this, punish her with more severe penances than you would use for any other fault, until she recognizes that she doesn't deserve to be made from even a very wretched kind of mud. The good Jesus

gives you a good Father. Let no one in this house speak about any other father than the one your Spouse has given you."

CHAPTER 28

1. Mt. 6:9
2. A reference either to pseudo-Augustinian *Soliloquies*, ch. 31; or to the *Confessions*, X, ch. 27. See *Life*, ch. 40, no. 6.
3. Allusion to Ps. 55:7.

CHAPTER 29

1. In ch. 28, no. 2.
2. Ps. 34:19.
3. She takes up again the theme of ch. 28, nos. 2, 11-13, mentioned in the heading of this chapter.
4. Allusion to Jn. 15:5.
5. She is probably alluding to *The Ascent of Mount Sion* by Bernardino de Laredo, trans. E. A. Peers (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1950).

CHAPTER 30

1. Mt. 26:39.
2. Mt. 6:9-10.
3. In the revised manuscript of Toledo, Teresa states more specifically: "...the holy Roman Church."
4. In ch. 25, no. 1.
5. In the first redaction she adds the detail that this person was an elderly nun.

CHAPTER 31

1. In ch. 30, no. 6.
2. Lk. 2:29
3. Mt. 17:4
4. Teresa is speaking of herself. According to an annotation she made in the ms. of Toledo, the "great contemplative" she consulted was St. Francis Borgia, S.J.
5. Lk. 18:13; actually "...the publican would not even lift up his eyes to heaven..."
6. The two faculties are the intellect and the memory. See no. 3. It is the will alone that is in the state of quiet. The intellect that is "so distracted" includes the imagination. In the ms. of Toledo above the word "intellect" Teresa wrote "or imagination." A little further on when speaking of paying no more attention to the

intellect than to a madman, she wrote, in the ms. of Toledo, above the word "intellect," "or mind or imagination, for I don't know what it is." And again in no. 10 of the ms. of Toledo, to "that which torments the will is the intellect," she added "or imagination."

7. In no. 6.

8. In no. 4.

CHAPTER 32

1. In the first redaction this passage reads: "Don't be like some nuns that do nothing but promise; and since they don't keep anything, they say they didn't understand what they promised when they made profession. I believe this because it is easy to talk and difficult to act. And if they thought that words are equal to deeds, they certainly didn't understand. Make those who will profess vows here learn through a long trial period not to think their life will amount to words alone, without deeds also. So I want you to know whom you are dealing with, as they say, and what the good Jesus offers the Father through you and what you are giving when you pray that His will be done in you, for you are giving nothing else than that."
2. Mt. 26:39.
3. In ch. 19.
4. In ch. 29, no. 4.

CHAPTER 33

1. In the preceding chapter.
2. In no. 1.
3. Mt. 3:15.
4. In the Castilian version of the Our Father the order in the petition would literally be: "Give us our daily bread this day."
5. Mt. 26:15.

CHAPTER 34

1. The first redaction contains some further thoughts: "In writing this I have felt the desire to know why, after the Lord said 'daily,' He then repeated by saying 'this day.' I want to tell you of my foolish reflections. If they are foolish, so be it because it is foolish enough of me to get involved in this explanation. But since we are learning about what we are asking for, let us think carefully about what it is so that, as I have said, we may appreciate its value and be thankful to Him who with so much care is teaching us."

2. In the first redaction she went on more at length: "With regard to the unfortunate ones who will be condemned, who will not enjoy Him in the next life, He did all He could for their profit and to be with them on 'this day' of this life to strengthen them. If they let themselves be conquered, it will not be His fault. And so as to win consent from the Father, He reminds Him that it will be for only a day."
3. Allusion to Ex. 16:3-4.
4. In chs. 2 and 8.
5. Teresa is referring to herself. See *Life*, ch. 30, no. 14; *Spir. Test.*, 1, no. 23.
6. Allusion to Lk. 7:36-48. See also *Life*, ch. 22, note 20 in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, vol. 1, p. 296.
7. Allusion to Mt. 9:20-22; Lk. 8:43-44.
8. Allusion to Mt. 20:22.
9. The first redaction adds: "reflect that this is a most advantageous hour for the soul, during which Jesus is very pleased if you keep Him company. Take great care, daughters, not to lose it."
10. Here Teresa left out an interesting remark from the first redaction: "I don't say that you shouldn't recite vocal prayers (don't take me literally and say that I am dealing with contemplation—unless the Lord places you in it), but that if you recite the Our Father you should understand how truly you are present with Him who taught it to you, kiss His feet in gratitude for it, and beg Him not to leave you."
11. In the first redaction she was more explicit: "It is a wonderful comfort to see an image of our Lady or of some saint to whom we are devoted—how much more of Christ—and something that greatly awakens devotion and that I would like to see at every turn of my head and glance of my eyes."
12. In nos. 5, 10.

CHAPTER 35

1. In ch. 3, nos. 8-10.
2. Allusion to Lk. 11:9.
3. The first redaction contains a further lament: "For it seems they want to cast Him out of the world by tearing down sacred buildings, killing so many priests, profaning so many churches—even Christians sometimes go to church more with the intention of offending Him than of worshipping Him."
4. Allusion to Mt. 8:25-26.

CHAPTER 36

1. Mt. 6:12.
2. In the manuscript of Toledo Teresa wrote in the margin: "Blessed be God! Such a thing does not apply to this house. To say it does would be untrue because the one who has been prioress is the one who afterward humbles herself most. But I say this because it is so common in other monasteries that I fear the devil will tempt us in this way. I consider it so dangerous that, please God, no soul. . ."
3. In no. 2.
4. In chs. 25 and 26.
5. In ch. 18.
6. In nos. 8-9.

CHAPTER 37

1. In the first redaction she alludes to her *Life*: ". . . for if I had not written about it elsewhere — and also so as not to go on at greater length, which would be a bother — a large book on prayer could be written. . ."
2. In no. 2.
3. In the first redaction, instead of the preceding passage and the previous number, we read: "Blessed be His name forever and ever, amen! And I ask the Eternal Father through Him to forgive my debts and great sins — for I have had no one nor anything to forgive, and every day I have something that needs to be forgiven — and give me grace so that one day I may have something to offer with my petition. That we might in some way appear to be sons of such a Father and brothers of such a Brother, Jesus taught us this sublime way of prayer and petitioned that we be angelic beings in this exile — provided that we strive with every effort to make our deeds conform to our words. We may thus know that if, as I mention, we do what we say, the Lord will not fail to accomplish what we ask, will give us His kingdom, and help with supernatural things (the prayer of quiet and perfect contemplation and the other favors the Lord grants us in such prayer in return for our efforts). Everything is small as far as what we can strive for and obtain on our own. But since this is what we ourselves can do, very certainly the Lord will help us because His Son asks this for us."

CHAPTER 38

1. In ch. 36, nos. 8-10.

2. Allusion to 2 Co. 11:14.
3. Allusion to 1 Co. 10:13.
4. The first redaction goes into more detail, but the Spanish of the passage is obscure and confusing. Here is an attempt at translation: "For without our realizing it, while it seems to us that we are proceeding safely, we cause ourselves to fall into a pit we cannot escape from. Although it may not always be a matter of a known mortal sin which would bring us to hell, it will weaken our legs along this road I began to tell you about—for I have not forgotten. Well you know how a person advances when he's bogged in a pit: his life ends there, and he will be doing enough if he doesn't keep from sinking lower, on into hell; he never improves. Since he doesn't improve, being there is of benefit neither to himself nor to others; rather, it does harm. For since the pit is dug out, many others who go along the way can also fall into it. If he gets out and covers it over with dirt, he does no harm to himself or to others. But I tell you that this temptation is very dangerous; I know much about it through experience, and so I am able to tell you about it; although not as well as I should like.

The devil makes you think you are poor and makes even others who practice prayer think this of themselves. And he is somewhat right because you have promised poverty—orally, that is. I say orally, for it is impossible that, if with the heart we understand what we promise and then promise it, the devil could draw us for twenty years and even our whole lives into this temptation; 'impossible,' because we would see that we are deceiving the world and our own selves.

Well now, someone thinking he is poor or after having promised poverty will say: 'I don't want anything; I have this because I can't get along without it; the fact is I have to live in order to serve God. God wants us to care for these bodies.' The devil, like an angel, teaches a thousand different kinds of things here—for all these things are good—and so he makes the soul think it is already poor and has this virtue, that everything is accomplished. Now let us come to the test; for this deception of the devil is not recognized in any other way than by always checking carefully one's attitudes; and if care is taken a sign will be given very soon: the person has more income than he needs (I mean than he really needs, that if he can manage with one servant he not have three); someone brings a lawsuit against him for some of it, or a poor peasant fails to pay his rent, and the person becomes so disturbed and makes such a big issue of it that one would think

he couldn't live without the money. He will say that he has to be a good administrator—for there is always some excuse. I don't say that he should give everything up but that he should strive to know whether what he is doing is good or not. For the truly poor person holds these things in so little esteem that, though for some reason he obtains them, they are never the cause of disturbance; he never thinks he will be in want. And if he does lack something, he doesn't care much; he considers this an accessory and not the main thing. Since he has higher thoughts, only reluctantly does he become involved with money.

If he is a religious, whether man or woman (for it is already verified that such a person is religious, at least should be), he may not have anything because sometimes nobody gives him anything. But if somebody gives him something, it's a wonder if he thinks it to be more than enough. He always likes to hold on to something. If he can have a habit made out of fine cloth he doesn't ask for one from rough cloth. He keeps some little things he can pawn or sell, even though they may be books; for if a sickness comes he will need more comfort than usual.

Sinner that I am! Here now; is that what you promised? Forget yourselves and surrender to God come what may. If you go about providing for the future, it would be better for you to have a fixed revenue. Even though this may be done without sin, it's good that we understand these imperfections so as to see that we are far from having this virtue; and we may then ask for it from God and strive for it. In thinking that we have it, we become careless and mistaken, which is worse.

This also happens to us in regard to humility: it seems to us we don't want honor or that we couldn't care less about anything. The occasion arises in which a point of honor is at stake, and at once, in what you feel and do, you realize that you are not humble. For if something brings you more honor, you do not renounce it—nor do those we mentioned even who are poor in spirit—for the sake of growing more in humility. And please God they will not go seeking out honor! And so often do some repeat that they don't want anything or care about anything that as a matter of fact they think this is so. Even the habit of saying it "makes them believe it more."

5. Allusion to Mk. 14:38-39; see also Mt. 6:13.

6. In nos. 6-7.

CHAPTER 39

1. For Teresa's own experience in this matter see *Life*, ch. 7, nos. 1, 11; ch. 8, no. 5.
2. In place of the above paragraphs the first redaction has the following: "Well be on guard, daughters, against some humble thoughts, caused by the devil, with their great disquiet over the seriousness of past sins, about whether I deserve to approach Communion or whether I have prepared myself well or about my unworthiness to live with good people; things of this sort. When such thoughts come with quiet, calm, and delight, they should be esteemed because they bring self-knowledge. But if they come with agitation, disquiet, and oppression of soul, and if the mind cannot be quieted, believe that they are a temptation and don't consider yourselves humble; humility doesn't come in this way."

CHAPTER 40

1. In ch. 38, nos. 3-4.
2. She writes about it in ch. 41.
3. Allusion to Ps. 89:50.
4. In ch. 16, nos. 6-8; ch. 25, nos. 1-5.
5. Teresa expressed herself more strongly in the first redaction: "As I say, then, this love is recognized when it is present, just as the love between a man and woman cannot be concealed; the more it is hidden the more it seems to reveal itself. However, since the love is for nothing but a worm, it doesn't even deserve the name 'love'; for it is founded on nothing—it's disgusting to make this comparison. And could one conceal a love so strong as is love of God, founded on such cement, having so much to love and so many reasons for loving? In sum, it is love and merits the name 'love,' for where it is present the vanities of the world must be shunned."
6. After "the bad inn lasts for only a night," the first redaction ends briefly with: "Let us praise God and always beseech Him to keep us in His hands, and all sinners as well, and not lead us into these hidden temptations."

CHAPTER 41

1. The first redaction continues thus: "Now let us deal with the fear of God, although I feel badly about not speaking for a while of this love of the world, for I know it well—on account of my sins—and I should like to teach you about it so that you might free yourselves from it forever. But because I am getting off the subject I will have to let this go."

2. See ch. 40, note 2.
3. In ch. 40, no. 3; ch. 16, nos. 6-9.
4. In nos. 1,3.
5. In no. 3.
6. In nos. 5-6.
7. The first redaction has a richer conclusion: "Here you see how with these two virtues—love and fear of God—you can advance on this road with calm and not think that at every step you see a ditch you could fall into; that way you would never arrive. But since we cannot even know with certitude that we in truth have these two virtues that are necessary, the Lord, taking pity on us because we live in so uncertain a life and among so many temptations and dangers, teaching us to ask—and asking for us—says with good reason: *But deliver us from evil. Amen.*"

CHAPTER 42

1. Lk. 22:15.
2. Allusion to 1 Jn. 1:10.
3. In Ph. 4:13.
4. Allusion to Mt. 3:20.
5. She speaks at length of this fount of living water in ch. 19.
6. She is referring to *The Book of her Life*.

MEDITATIONS ON THE SONG OF SONGS

INTRODUCTION

1. See Prologue and ch. 1, no. 8.
2. Ch. 1, no. 8.
3. See *ibid.*
4. Ch. 1, no. 4.
5. Ch. 1, no. 6.
6. Ch. 1, no. 8.
7. Prologue, no. 1.
8. Ch. 6, no. 8.
9. Ch. 1, no. 8.
10. *Life*, ch. 15, no. 8.
11. Ch. 1, no. 11.
12. See ch. 1, no. 8.
13. Ch. 1, no. 2.
14. See ch. 6, no. 7.

15. Cf. *Interior Castle*, VI, ch. 10, no. 5; *Life*, ch. 23, nos. 1-5.
16. Cf. *Interior Castle*, VII, ch. 1, nos. 6-7; *Spiritual Testimonies*, 13; 65, no. 9.
17. Cf. *Spiritual Testimonies*, 3, no. 10; *Life*, ch. 6, no. 9; ch. 18, no. 14; *Interior Castle*, V, ch. 2, no. 4; VII, ch. 2, no. 5.
18. Cf. *Interior Castle*, VII, ch. 2, nos. 6-7; VII, ch. 3, no. 13.
19. See ch. 6, no. 8.
20. See *Biblioteca Mística Carmelitana*, ed. Silverio de Santa Teresa, vol. 18 (Burgos: El Monte Carmelo 1934), p. 320.
21. See *ibid.*, vol. 20 (1935), p. 349.
22. In ch. 1, no. 8.
23. See ch. 3, no. 8.
24. In ch. 7, no. 2.
25. In ch. 4, no. 1.
26. For further details on some of these matters see D. De Pablo Maroto, "Meditaciones Sobre Los Cantares," *Introducción A La Lectura De Santa Teresa* (Madrid: Espiritualidad, 1978), pp. 383-391; Pietro della Madre di Dio, "La Sacra Scrittura nelle Opere di S. Teresa di Gesu," *Rivista Di Vita Spirituale* 18 (1964): 41-102; and Tomás De La Cruz, "Santa Teresa De Jesús Contemplativa," *Ephemerides Carmeliticae* 13 (1962): 9-62.

PROLOGUE

1. About five lines are missing from the first page which is torn.
2. The prologue is incomplete for the same reason given in note 1.

CHAPTER 1

1. The liturgy on Holy Thursday recalls Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet and the *mandatum novum* (the new commandment of love). See Jn. 13:1-17, 34.
2. In no. 5; she is referring to herself.
3. In no. 1.
4. In no. 2.
5. Allusion to the *Life* and the *Way of Perfection*.
6. In ch. 2, no. 16.

CHAPTER 2

1. Allusion to Jb. 7:1.
2. In chs. 4-7.
3. In no. 2.
4. Allusion to Mt. 25:1-14.
5. Allusion to Lk. 12:16-21.

6. In no. 7.
7. The "discipline" is a term used to refer to the practice of self-scourging with knotted cords, a method of physical penance commonly performed in monastic orders. According to Teresa's *Constitutions* the discipline of cords is to be taken on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.
8. In Teresa's *Constitutions* the woolen tunics are to be made of coarse material.
9. The *Constitutions* of Teresa also state that the Sisters, as the rule commands, are never to eat meat except out of necessity.
10. The topic begun in no. 6, and then set aside.
11. In ch. 1, no. 2.
12. See *Way of Perfection*, ch. 18, no. 2; ch. 32, no. 7; ch. 41, no. 8; *Interior Castle*, II, ch. 1, no. 6; VI, ch. 4; ch. 5, nos. 1, 6 and 12.
13. See *Foundations*, ch. 6, nos. 9-13, 18-19.
14. The first has to do with the world, its comforts and enjoyments (no. 22); the second with honor and esteem (no. 26).
15. Mt. 14:29.
16. See *Way of Perfection*, ch. 42, nos. 3-4; *Life*, ch. 13, nos. 3-6; *Interior Castle*, I, ch. 2, no. 10.
17. St. Diego of Alcalá (d. 1463) was a popular saint in Teresa's time because of the miraculous cure of Prince Charles in 1563 which was attributed to him.

CHAPTER 3

1. In no. 1.
2. She is speaking of St. Paulinus of Nola (353-431).
3. This person was Alonso de Cordobilla. He sailed from Cádiz and died in Gibraltar October 28, 1566.
4. Mk. 14:38.
5. Mt. 26:38.
6. Sg. 1:2.

CHAPTER 4

1. She alludes to *Life*, chs. 14-15 and *Way of Perfection*, chs. 30-31, where she deals with the prayer of quiet.
2. See above note 1.
3. See this same comparison made in *Way of Perfection*, ch. 31, no. 9.
4. Rm. 8:18.
5. Sg. 6:3; 2:16.
6. See the corresponding locutions relative to the spiritual marriage in *Interior Castle*, VII, ch. 2, no. 1, ch. 3, no. 2; *Spir. Test.*, 31.

7. See *Confessions of St. Augustine*, X, ch. 29.

8. Sg. 2:16.

CHAPTER 5

1. Sg. 2:3-4.

2. Allusion to Wis. 16:20.

3. Lk. 1:35.

4. Ac. 9:3-11.

5. Allusion to Sg. 2:5.

6. See ch. 4, no. 1; she is alluding to either the *Life* or the *Way of Perfection*.

CHAPTER 6

1. Allusion to Sg. 2:3.

2. In her monastery where she is writing; possibly in Avila.

3. Lk. 1:34-35.

4. Sg. 4:7.

5. Sg. 6:10.

6. Sg. 2:5.

CHAPTER 7

1. She is referring to her experience in Salamanca, 1571, described in *Spir. Test.*, 12; see also *Interior Castle*, VI, ch. 11, nos. 8-10.

2. See *Life*, ch. 30, no. 19.

3. Allusion to Jn. 4:39-43.

4. Sg. 8:4.

5. In ch. 4, nos. 4-5.

6. She is alluding probably to her *Life*, ch. 13, nos. 8-10.

THE INTERIOR CASTLE

INTRODUCTION

1. Antonio De San Joaquin, "Anotaciones al P. Ribera," *Año Teresiano*, 12 vols. (Madrid, 1733-1769), 8:149-150.

2. I, ch. 2, no. 7; see also IV, ch. 1, no. 1; ch. 2, no. 7.

3. Prologue, no. 1.

4. For a detailed treatment of this whole question, cf. Efrén de La Madre de Dios and Otger Steggink, *Tiempo Y Vida De Santa Teresa* (Madrid: BAC, 1977), pp. 701-805; cf. also Ildefonso Moriones, *El Carmelo Teresiano* (Vitoria: Ediciones El Carmen, 1978), pp. 97-180. For a treatment of these questions from a

- different perspective, cf. Joachim Smet, *The Carmelites: The Post Tridentine Period*, vol. 2 (Darien, Ill.: Carmelite Spiritual Center, 1976), pp.1-131.
5. *Letters*, October 22, 1577.
 6. IV, ch. 2, no. 1.
 7. V, ch. 4, no. 1.
 8. Prologue, no. 1.
 9. Ibid.
 10. Epilogue, no. 1.
 11. VI, ch. 4, no. 9.
 12. IV, ch. 1, no. 1; see also V, ch. 4, no. 11.
 13. *Biblioteca Mística Carmelitana*, ed., Silverio de Santa Teresa, vol. 18 (Burgos: El Monte Carmelo 1934), p. 315.
 14. I, ch. 1, no. 1.
 15. *Way of Perfection*, ch. 28, no. 9.
 16. *Biblioteca Mística*, vol. 18, pp. 276-278.
 17. Ibid., vol. 2 (1915), p. 493.
 18. *Life*, ch. 40, no. 5.
 19. Cf. no. 10.
 20. Cf. I, ch. 1, nos. 2-3.
 21. Epilogue, no. 3.
 22. Cf. I, ch. 1, no. 7.
 23. Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 6, 8.
 24. I, ch. 2, no. 14.
 25. Cf. VII, ch. 4, no. 9.
 26. Cf. III, ch. 1, no. 5.
 27. Cf. III, ch. 2, nos. 4-5, 7, 8.
 28. Cf. III, ch. 2, no. 13; ch. 1, no. 7.
 29. Cf. III, ch. 2, no. 9.
 30. I, ch. 2, no. 7.
 31. Cf. Tomás de la Cruz, "Santa Teresa de Jesús Contemplativa," *Ephemerides Carmeliticae* 13(1962): 9-62.
 32. Cf. IV, ch. 1, no. 1.
 33. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 4.
 34. Ibid., no. 7.
 35. Ibid.
 36. Cf. IV, ch. 3, nos. 1-3.
 37. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 8.
 38. IV, ch. 2, nos. 3, 8, 9.
 39. Cf. V, ch. 1, nos. 3-5, 9-10.
 40. Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 5, 11.
 41. Cf. V, ch. 2, nos. 2-5.
 42. Cf. V, ch. 4, no. 4.

43. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 9.
44. Cf. VI, ch. 1, no. 1.
45. Cf. VI, ch. 2, no. 1; ch. 4, no. 1.
46. VI, ch. 4, no. 1.
47. Cf. VI, ch. 1, nos. 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9.
48. Cf. VI, ch. 2.
49. VI, ch. 4, no. 2.
50. Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 3-4.
51. Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 5, 8.
52. Cf. VI, ch. 5, no. 10.
53. Cf. VI, ch. 6, nos. 10-13.
54. VI, ch. 7, no. 13.
55. Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 6, 7, 11, 12.
56. VI, ch. 11, nos. 1, 6.
57. Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 2, 4, 11.
58. Cf. VI, ch. 4, no. 4.
59. Cf. VII, ch. 1, no. 5.
60. *Ibid.*, no. 6.
61. *Ibid.*, no. 8.
62. *Ibid.*, nos. 8-9.
63. VII, ch. 2, no. 1.
64. *Ibid.*, no. 3.
65. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 4.
66. *Ibid.*, no. 5.
67. Cf. VII, ch. 4, nos. 4, 6, 9, 12.
68. *Ibid.*, nos. 14-15.
69. Cf. Jose Vicente Rodriguez, "Castillo Interior O Las Moradas," *Introducción A La Lectura De Santa Teresa* (Madrid: Espiritualidad, 1978): 368-371.
70. See III, ch. 1, no. 1, note 2.
71. See "Castillo Interior O Las Moradas," p. 318.

PROLOGUE

1. An allusion to her *Life* and *The Way of Perfection*.
2. This is a veiled reference to her *Life*. The autograph of this work was requested by the Inquisition in 1576 and kept in its archives until 1588.
3. It was June 2, 1577. She completed the work in Avila on November 29 of the same year.
4. These were Fr. Jerome Gratian and her confessor Dr. Alonso Velázquez, future bishop of Osma and later archbishop of Santiago de Compostela.

THE FIRST DWELLING PLACES

CHAPTER 1

1. Allusion to Jn. 14:2. Teresa uses the Spanish words *moradas*, *apuestos*, and *piezas* in approximately the same sense; they refer to rooms or dwelling places within the castle. The fundamental text of Jn. 14:2 has led previous translators to speak of these rooms as mansions. Most people today think of a mansion as a large stately house, not what Teresa had in mind with the term *moradas*. New versions of Scripture render Jn. 14:2 as "in my Father's house there are many dwelling places." "Dwelling places" turns out to be a more precise translation of Teresa's *moradas* than is the classic "mansions," and more biblical and theological in tone.
2. Allusion to Pr. 8:31.
3. Gn. 1:26-27.
4. In no. 1.
5. Jn. 9:2-3.
6. She is probably alluding to Osuna's *Third Spiritual Alphabet* and Laredo's *Ascent of Mount Sion*, favorite books of hers. See *Life*, ch.4, no. 7; ch. 23, no. 12.
7. She also received in an intellectual vision mystical understanding of this truth. See *Spir. Test.*, 20.
8. Gn. 19:26.
9. Fr. Gratian added "and eight" after "thirty years," in accordance with Jn. 5:5.
10. Allusion to Mt. 6:21.

CHAPTER 2

1. Allusion to Ps. 1:3.
2. The person is Teresa herself. See *Spir. Test.*, 20.
3. For similar comparisons see *Life*, ch. 40. no. 5; *Spir. Test.*, 52.
4. Allusion to Ps. 127:1.
5. In no. 2.
6. See her *Constitutions*, nos. 2,7.
7. Teresa laments the fact there are few books that explain mystical (supernatural) prayer in depth. In no. 1 of the following chapter she asserts that there are many books dealing with ascetical matters. Thus her orientation in this book is toward the mystical.
8. She is referring to the *Life* and the *Way of Perfection*, and alludes to a divine influence in the composition of her mystical

writings. See *Life*, ch. 39, no. 8: "...many of the things I write about here do not come from my own head, but my heavenly Master told them to me."

9. In no. 7.
10. A plant about a foot in height, which grows in Andalusia and Valencia, resembling the palm tree. Only the center or heart, the tender part, is eaten.
11. In no. 10.
12. See no. 8. Teresa avoids any arrangement of these dwelling places into neatly structured rows with set numbers. She thereby in her allegory makes it easy for us to imagine a marvelous depth and abundance of inner riches.
13. In the *Way of Perfection*, ch. 39, no. 5. See also *Life*, ch. 13, no. 15.
14. In ch. 1, no. 8.
15. In nos. 4, 12.
16. Allusion to 2 Co. 11:14.
17. In the *Way of Perfection*, ch. 38, no. 2; ch. 39 passim.
18. See *Life*, ch. 13, nos. 8, 10; *Way of Perfection*, ch. 4; *Method for the Visitation of Monasteries*, nos. 17, 20, 21.

THE SECOND DWELLING PLACES

CHAPTER 1

1. See *Life*, chs. 11-13; *Way of Perfection*, passim.
2. In VI, ch. 3.
3. Lk. 15:16.
4. Allusion to Jn. 15:5.
5. Allusion to Jgs. 7:5.
6. See *Life*, ch. 4, no. 2; ch. 11, nos. 10-15; *Way of Perfection*, ch. 20, no. 2; ch. 21, no. 2; chs. 23, 36, 41.
7. Allusion to Wis. 16:20.
8. Allusion to Mt. 20:22.
9. In V, ch. 3, nos. 3-12.
10. Jn. 20:19-21.
11. In no. 1.
12. Allusion to Sir. 3:25.
13. Jn. 14:6.
14. Jn. 14:9.
15. Allusion to Mt. 10:24.
16. Allusion to Mt. 26:41.

THE THIRD DWELLING PLACES

CHAPTER 1

1. Ps. 112:1.

2. Teresa commissioned Fr. Jerome Gratian to review her work. Gratian did so scrupulously and made corrections here and there throughout the manuscript. For example, in this passage he crossed out the word "secure" and substituted "right." In fact this whole chapter has a number of corrections by Gratian who was fearful lest the Saint affirm any certitude about the state of grace, or security about one's own salvation, that would have gone contrary to the teaching of the Council of Trent or have been similar to certain theories of the *Alumbrados*. Fortunately, Gratian made the deletion marks so as to leave the original completely legible. The Jesuit Ribera, in turn, corrected Gratian's corrections with marginal comments such as the following: "One doesn't have to cross out any of the holy Mother's words." A further example of the skirmish that went on in the margins of Teresa's manuscript can be found in no. 8 of this chapter. In that delicate passage Teresa wrote: "Shouldn't we consider ourselves lucky to be able to repay something of what we owe Him for His service toward us? I say these words 'His service toward us' unwillingly; but the fact is that He did nothing else but serve us all the time He lived in this world." Gratian changed "His service toward us" to "having died for us" and crossed out what followed. Ribera again noted: "Nothing should be deleted; what the Saint said has been very well said." All of this led to Ribera's written admonition on the first page of the autograph of *The Interior Castle*: "What the holy Mother wrote in this book is frequently crossed out, and other words are added or a gloss is made in the margin. Usually the cancellation is poorly conceived and the text is better the way it was first written. . . . And since I have read and looked over this work with a certain amount of care, I think I should advise anyone reading it to read it as the holy Mother wrote it, for she understood and said things better, and to pay no attention to what was added or changed unless the correction was made by the Saint herself in her own hand, which is seldom. And I ask out of charity anyone who reads this book to reverence the words and letters formed by so holy a hand and try to understand her correctly; and you will see that there is nothing to correct. Even if you do not understand, believe that she who wrote it knew better and that the words cannot be cor-

rected well unless their meaning is fully understood. If their meaning is not grasped, what is very appropriately said will seem inappropriate. Such is the way books are ruined and lost."

3. Jn. 11:16.
4. In no. 2.
5. Ps. 112:1.
6. In no. 1.
7. Mt. 19:16-22.
8. In no. 6.
9. Mt. 19:22.
10. Mt. 19:27.
11. Teresa first wrote "as St. Paul says," then added between the lines "or Christ." Gratian crossed out both and wrote: "St. Luke says it in chapter 17." See Lk. 17:10.
12. Allusion to Lk. 12:48.
13. This is a vague reference, perhaps to *The Way of Perfection*, ch.17, nos. 2, 7.

CHAPTER 2

1. Allusion to the young man in the Gospel. See III, ch. 1, no. 6.
2. In no. 1. See III, ch. 1, no. 5.
3. Allusion to Lk. 22:42.
4. In no. 4. See III, ch. 1, no. 7.
5. Allusion to Ps. 119:137. For a similar use of this text see *Life*, ch. 19:9. On the following theme about God's different ways with souls, see *Way of Perfection*, chs. 16-18, especially ch. 17, no.7.
6. In III, ch. 1, nos. 1, 5, 8.
7. Words from the Carmelite Rule (*The Rule of St. Albert*) and taken from Is. 30:15.

THE FOURTH DWELLING PLACES

CHAPTER 1

1. Teresa uses the Spanish word *contentos* (here rendered in English as consolations) to denote experiences (such as joy, peace, satisfaction) that are not infused; that is, experiences perceived as a result of prayer and virtue but similar to those derived from everyday events. On the other hand, she uses the Spanish word *gustos* (here rendered in English as spiritual delights) to denote infused experiences. Infused, "supernatural," or mystical prayer begins in these fourth dwelling places with the

- prayer of infused recollection (ch. 3) and quiet, or spiritual delight (ch. 2). Actually Teresa presents the fourth dwelling places as a stage of transition in which the natural and the supernatural (or the acquired and the infused) are intermingled.
2. In her *Life*. She is alluding to the many chapters there that deal with mystical experiences. See chs. 14-32 and 37-40. When Teresa wrote the *Life* she had not yet come to the stage she describes in the seventh dwelling places. What she explains in her *Life* under the symbol of the fourth water corresponds to the sixth dwelling places. As a result, she points out that she has a better understanding of some matters concerning the spiritual life than she did in that book. See I, ch. 2, no. 7; IV, ch. 2, no. 5.
 3. Allusion to Mt. 20:13. The absolute divine freedom in the granting or denying of mystical favors is frequently insisted upon in Teresa's writings. In this work see IV, ch. 2, no. 9; V, ch. 1, no. 12; VI, ch. 4, no. 12; ch. 7, no. 9; ch. 8, no. 5.
 4. In III, ch. 2, no. 10.
 5. Allusion to Jn. 15:5.
 6. Ps. 119:32.
 7. In no. 4.
 8. In *Life*, ch. 12; *Way of Perfection*, chs. 16-20.
 9. One of Teresa's cherished maxims. See the *Foundations*, ch. 5, no. 2.
 10. We do not know who the learned man was. Some suggest that it may have been St. John of the Cross who was Teresa's director and confessor from 1572-1575. But Teresa's ignorance of the difference between the imagination (*pensamiento*, or mind, as she often refers to it) and the intellect was not total ignorance. See *Life*, ch. 17, no. 5.
 11. For many years this wandering of the mind deeply troubled the Saint. See *Life*, ch. 17, no. 7; *Way of Perfection*, ch. 31, no. 8. In this work she has come to a definite doctrinal position on the matter. The instability and rebellion of the imagination is a consequence of the disorder produced in us through original sin. See no. 11 of this chapter.
 12. In the prologue, no. 1.
 13. Sg. 8:1.
 14. In II, no. 9.
 15. See VII, ch. 2, no. 11.

CHAPTER 2

1. In ch. 1, nos. 4-6.

2. See ch. 1, no. 5.
3. See *Life*, chs. 14-15.
4. In III, ch. 2, nos. 9-10; IV, ch. 1, nos. 4-6.
5. In ch. 1, nos. 5, 6, 10.
6. In ch. 1, no. 4.
7. Ps. 119:32. See ch. 1, no. 5.
8. In VII, ch. 1, nos. 3, 7, 10; ch. 2, nos. 3, 9.
9. In no. 4.
10. In ch. 1, no. 1, she says fourteen years. She finished the first redaction of her *Life* in 1562 and is writing these pages in the latter part of 1577.
11. In no. 5.

CHAPTER 3

1. She spoke of the prayer of recollection in various places: *Life*, chs. 14-15; *Way of Perfection*, chs. 28-29; *Spiritual Testimonies*, 59, no. 3. But Teresa is not consistent in her terminology. Sometimes she speaks of a recollection that is not infused (in the *Way of Perfection*); at other times of a recollection that is infused: in the *Life*, using the term indiscriminately with "quiet" to designate the first degree of infused prayer, and in the *Spiritual Testimonies* to designate the first faint experience of mystical prayer that prepares the way for the prayer of quiet. See no. 8 of this chapter.
2. She is alluding to works such as Osuna's *Third Spiritual Alphabet*, IX, ch. 7; and Laredo's *Ascent of Mount Sion*, III, ch. 41. See *Life*, ch. 12, nos. 1, 4, 5, 7; ch. 22, nos. 13, 18.
3. In I, ch. 2, nos. 4, 12, 15.
4. In *Confessions*, X, ch. 27; or in the pseudo-Augustine's *Soliloquies*, ch. 31. See *Life*, ch. 40, no. 6; *Way of Perfection*, ch. 28, no. 2.
5. In Osuna's *Third Spiritual Alphabet*, VI, ch. 4.
6. See Laredo's *Ascent of Mount Sion*, III, ch. 27.
7. *Treatise on Prayer and Meditation* by Granada and at that time attributed to St. Peter of Alcántara.
8. In nos. 4-6; see ch. 2, no. 9.
9. Perhaps she is referring to a parallel passage in the *Way of Perfection* ch. 31, nos. 3, 7.
10. Allusion to Ph. 4:13.
11. In the book of *Foundations*, ch. 6. She will insist on this again in VI, ch. 7, no. 13.
12. See *Life*, chs. 16-17, where Teresa dwells at greater length on

this *sleep of the faculties* as though dealing with a special stage in the degrees of mystical prayer.

13. Teresa makes a pun here with the Spanish words *arrobamiento* (rapture) and *abobamiento* (foolishness).
14. In nos. 11-12.

THE FIFTH DWELLING PLACES

CHAPTER 1

1. Allusion to 2 Co. 11:14.
2. Allusion to Mt. 22:14.
3. Allusion to Mt. 13:44.
4. In IV, ch. 3, no. 11.
5. In no. 3.
6. Another allusion to 2 Co. 11:14.
7. In IV, ch. 3, nos. 11-14.
8. In IV, ch. 1, nos. 8-12.
9. She made a similar observation in the *Way of Perfection*, ch. 31, no. 10.
10. See *Life*, ch. 5, no. 3; ch. 13, no. 19; ch. 25, no. 22.
11. In IV, ch. 1, no. 2; ch. 2, no. 9.
12. See no. 7.
13. She speaks of them in the next chapter, nos. 7-14.
14. In no. 8.
15. See *Life*, ch. 18, no. 15; *Spir. Test.*, 49.
16. Sg. 2:4.
17. Sg. 3:2.
18. Jn. 20:19.
19. See VII, ch. 2, no. 3.

CHAPTER 2

1. In ch. 1, no. 2.
2. In the Dwelling Places I-IV.
3. See Col. 3:3-4.
4. In ch. 1, nos. 10-11.
5. In VI, ch. 6, no. 1; ch. 11 *passim*.
6. In ch. 1, nos. 2, 3, 13.
7. In ch. 1, no. 12; IV, ch. 2, no. 9.
8. In VI, ch. 10, no. 8; VII, ch. 3, no. 4.
9. In ch. 1, no. 12.
10. Allusion to Sg. 2:4.

11. Lk. 22:15.
12. She is referring to herself. See *Life*, ch. 38, no. 18.

CHAPTER 3

1. For Teresa the little dove is equivalent to the little butterfly; she uses these images interchangeably. See ch. 4, no. 1; VI, ch. 2, no. 1; ch. 4, no. 1; ch. 6, no. 1; ch. 11, no. 1; VII, ch. 3, no. 1.
2. She is referring to herself. See *Life*, ch. 7, no. 10.
3. In ch. 2, nos. 6-7.
4. See Jn. 11:33-36.
5. In ch. 1, no. 6; IV, ch. 1, nos. 4-5; ch. 2, nos. 3-5.
6. In ch. 1, nos. 3-4.
7. The delightful union is the infused prayer of union.
8. The union that arises from conformity of wills.
9. Jon. 4:6-7.
10. Jn. 17:22.
11. Allusion to 1 Jn. 4:20.
12. In the *Way of Perfection*, ch. 7; *Foundations*, ch. 5.

CHAPTER 4

1. The prayer of union.
2. Having begun this work in Toledo, June 2, 1577, Teresa in less than a month and a half had got as far as chapter three of the fifth dwelling place. About the middle of July she moved to Avila where she probably wrote chapter three. She then abandoned all work on her book until the beginning of November. And by November 29, 1577, her task was completed.
3. In her comparison, Teresa makes use of the stages that were followed in her day for the arrangement of a marriage: 1) meetings between the young man and woman; 2) exchanging of gifts; 3) falling in love; 4) the joining of hands; 5) betrothal; 6) marriage.
4. See, e.g., IV, ch. 3, nos. 9-10.
5. In no. 4.
6. In ch. 3, no. 2.

THE SIXTH DWELLING PLACES

CHAPTER 1

1. Allusion to the meeting referred to in V, ch. 4, no. 4.
2. See V, ch. 1, nos. 9-11; V, ch. 4, nos. 3-4.

3. See VII, ch. 3, nos. 4-5.
4. She is referring to herself. See *Life*, ch. 28, no. 14.
5. The "favor that was mentioned" is the prayer of union or the "meetings" between the two who will be betrothed, the prayer characteristic of the fifth dwelling place. The person Teresa refers to is herself. "Forty years ago" would have been 1537. For an account of these sufferings and trials see *Life*, chs. 4-6; for her first experiences of union, see *Life*, ch. 4, no. 7.
6. The person here is Teresa, and the confessor is Father Baltasar Alvarez, S.J. See *Life*, ch. 30, no. 13.
7. See *Life*, ch. 30, no. 12.
8. In nos. 9-10.
9. She does so in VI, ch. 11.

CHAPTER 2

1. In the fourth dwelling places.
2. See IV, ch. 3, nos. 11-14.
3. For a parallel passage from her personal experience see her *Life*, ch. 29, no. 10; in no. 13 of that same chapter she describes her experience of the transverberation.
4. She is alluding to herself. See *Spir. Test.*, 59, no. 13.
5. In *Spir. Test.*, 59, no. 15 she speaks of how even the learned men she consulted were free of fears about this prayer. St. John of Avila wrote to her assuring her that the prayer was good. For a description of her personal experience of this grace see also her *Life*, chs. 29 and 30.
6. See nos. 1, 3, and 5. These favors proceed "from very deep within the interior part of the soul," from "the Spouse, who is in the seventh dwelling place," there, "where the Lord who is unchanging dwells."
7. In no. 6.

CHAPTER 3

1. This chapter restates what was said in ch. 25 of the *Life*. In both places the prevailing effort is to distinguish between genuine locutions (coming from God or His saints) and false ones (from the imagination or the devil). In this chapter Teresa deals first with locutions in general (nos. 1-11); then she goes on to treat of a more subtle kind of mystical locution accompanied by "a certain intellectual vision" (nos. 12-18).
2. In ch. 2, nos. 1-4, 8.
3. In no. 1.

4. In ch. 1, nos. 7-15.
5. In a veiled way she is alluding to her own experience described in her *Life*, ch. 25, nos. 14-19.
6. In no. 7.
7. See Jon. chs. 1 and 4. Though Teresa refers to Jonah about six times in her writings and could be referring to herself, she might, on the other hand, be thinking of Teresa Layz the benefactress of Alba about whom she speaks in the *Foundations*, ch. 20, and especially in no. 12.
8. In nos. 5-7.
9. Allusion to Lk. 10:16.
10. She speaks of intellectual visions in chs. 8 and 10; see also ch. 5, nos. 8-9.
11. In ch. 10; also in ch. 4.
12. A reference to herself. See *Life*, ch. 25, nos. 14-19.
13. In nos. 12-16.
14. In no. 11.
15. Allusion to 1 Co. 10:13.
16. Jos. 10:12-13. See *Life*, ch. 25, no. 1.

CHAPTER 4

1. In regard to this terminology see *Life*, ch. 20, no. 1; *Spir. Test.*, 59, no. 9.
2. The need for great courage in order to receive these mystical graces is often stated by Teresa. See *Life*, ch. 13, no. 2; ch. 20, no. 4; ch. 39, no. 21; *Spir. Test.*, 59, no. 9; *Way of Perfection*, ch. 18; and in these sixth dwelling places, ch. 5, nos. 1, 5, 12; ch. 11, no. 11.
3. In IV, ch. 3, nos. 11-12; VI, ch. 3, no. 10.
4. In *Life*, ch. 20, *Spir. Test.*, 59, no. 9.
5. In ch. 2, no. 4.
6. In ch. 8 she will deal with intellectual visions and in ch. 9, with imaginative ones.
7. Fr. Gratian; see Introduction.
8. See Gn. 28:12.
9. See Ex. 3:1-16.
10. This happened sometime during the first months of 1574. See *Foundations*, ch. 21, nos. 1-2.
11. In IV, ch. 3, nos. 11-13.
12. Allusion to Sg. 3:2.
13. Allusion to Jn. 9:6-7.
14. In no. 9.

15. See *Life*, ch. 20, no. 5.
16. She is alluding to herself. See *Life*, ch. 31, no. 13.
17. In nos. 4-5.

CHAPTER 5

1. On the difference between rapture and flight of the spirit see *Life*, ch. 18, no. 7; ch. 20, no. 1; *Spir. Test.*, 59, nos. 9-10.
2. In ch. 4, no. 1.
3. See the account of her personal experience in *Life*, ch. 20, nos. 3-7.
4. She is speaking of herself; see *Life*, ch. 20, nos. 5-6.
5. For parallel passages see *Life*, ch. 22, no. 13; ch. 20, no. 4.
6. In IV, ch. 2, nos. 2-5.
7. Allusion to Pr. 8:29.
8. Allusion to Lk. 12:48.
9. She is speaking of herself. See *Spir. Test.*, 46.
10. She returns to the theme taken up in no. 1.
11. Allusion to 2 Co. 12:2-4.
12. Concerning the distinction between the soul and the spirit, see VII, ch. 1, no. 11; *Spir. Test.*, 59, no. 11; 25, no. 1; *Life*, ch. 20, no. 14.
13. Nb. 13:18-27.
14. She continues to use the symbolic language (jewels and meetings) introduced in V, ch. 4, no. 3.
15. See nos. 1-5; ch. 4, nos. 1-2.

CHAPTER 6

1. Ex. 14:21-22; Jos. 3:13-17.
2. Allusion to Gn. 8:8-9, used again in VII, ch. 3, no. 13.
3. In ch. 11.
4. "Lord, if I am still necessary to your people I don't refuse to live; may Your will be done." See the liturgical office for St. Martin in the Roman Breviary.
5. Lk. 15:22-32.
6. She tells about St. Peter of Alcántara's manner of life in *Life*, ch. 27, nos. 16-20; ch. 30, nos. 2-7.

CHAPTER 7

1. She is referring to herself. See *Life*, ch. 26, no. 2; ch. 34, no. 10; *Spir. Test.*, 1, no. 26; 48, no. 1; 59, no. 12.
2. In *Life*, ch. 22.
3. In *Life*, ch. 22, nos. 2-3.

4. The person to whom Teresa refers is unknown. The passage is intentionally somewhat enigmatic.
5. See Jn. 8:12; 14:6, 9.
6. 1 K. 18:30-39.
7. In VI, ch. 11, no. 8.
8. In VII, ch. 2, nos. 3, 9, 10; ch. 3, nos. 8, 10, 11; ch. 4, nos. 1-2.
9. At the end of no. 7.
10. Sg. 3:1-3.
11. See *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, X, ch. 6, nos. 9-10.
12. In no. 7.
13. In nos. 9-10.
14. In ch. 4, nos. 2, 9; *Life*, ch. 22, no. 10.
15. Jn. 16:7.

CHAPTER 8

1. This person is Teresa herself. See *Life*, ch. 27, nos. 2-5.
2. In ch. 3.
3. See *Life*, ch. 27, no. 3.
4. See *Life*, ch. 25, no. 18; *Spir. Test.*, 22, no. 1; 31; 48; 58, no. 16; *Int. Castle*, VI, ch. 3, no. 5.
5. In ch. 6, nos. 1-6.
6. The series of favors mentioned in the preceding chapters.
7. In nos. 3-5.
8. In no. 3.
9. Allusion to 1 Co. 10:13. See ch. 3, no. 17. She also refers to this statement of St. Paul in her *Life*, ch. 23, no. 15.
10. In no. 1.
11. She is alluding probably to interventions of the Spanish Inquisition.

CHAPTER 9

1. In ch. 8; the intellectual visions.
2. In nos. 2-3.
3. A popular belief in Teresa's time was that certain stones had curative powers; for example, the bezoar.
4. Teresa is referring to herself. See *Life*, ch. 28, especially no. 4; *Spir. Test.*, 58, no. 15, in which she states that "she never saw anything with her bodily eyes."
5. Mt. 25:41.
6. Ac. 9:3-4.
7. In ch. 8, no. 3.
8. In ch. 8, nos. 4, 8.

9. She is referring to Fr. Domingo Báñez, O.P. See her *Book of Foundations*, ch. 8, no. 3.
10. See *Life*, ch. 25, nos. 5-6.
11. In *Foundations*, ch. 8, no. 3.
12. This person is herself. See *Life*, ch. 29, nos. 5-6.
13. See 1 S. 15:10-11.
14. She is speaking of herself. The man could have been St. John of the Cross who was confessor at the monastery of the Incarnation in Avila when St. Teresa was prioress there from 1571-1574.
15. In no. 16; IV, ch. 2, no. 9.

CHAPTER 10

1. See *Life*, ch. 40, no. 9.
2. For the origin of this comparison see *Life*, ch. 40, no. 10.
3. Allusion to Mt. 6:12, 15; Lk. 6:37.
4. Teresa gives a personal account of this experience in *Life*, ch. 40, nos. 1-4.
5. Ps. 116:11.
6. Jn. 18:36-38.
7. In nos. 2 and 5.

CHAPTER 11

1. The person is herself. See ch. 10, nos. 2-5.
2. In ch. 2, no. 1; ch. 6, no. 6; ch. 8, no. 4.
3. Teresa describes an equivalent experience of hers that took place at Salamanca in 1571. See *Spir. Test.*, 12, nos. 1-5.
4. In no. 2.
5. She is speaking of herself. See *Spir. Test.*, 59, no. 14; *Life*, ch. 20, nos. 12-13.
6. Jn. 4:7-14.
7. In nos. 2 and 4.
8. See ch. 4.
9. Mt. 20:22.
10. Lk. 7:40-48.

THE SEVENTH DWELLING PLACES

CHAPTER 1

1. In I, ch. 2, nos. 1-3.
2. In no. 3.
3. In the fifth dwelling place.

4. Ac. 9:8.
5. Jn. 14:23. For another description of this grace see *Spir. Test.*, 13.
6. Through an intellectual vision; see no. 6.
7. In VI, ch. 3, nos. 3 and 17; ch. 6, no. 6; ch. 7, no. 3; ch. 8, nos. 3-4.
8. Teresa is referring to herself.
9. Lk. 10:40.
10. In VI, ch. 5, nos. 1 and 9.

CHAPTER 2

1. See her corresponding account in *Spir. Test.*, 31.
2. The one referred to in ch. 1, nos. 6-7.
3. Teresa first wrote: "between two who have consummated marriage." She then changed it to the present reading.
4. In V, ch. 4, no. 3.
5. See no. 1; *Spir. Test.*, 31.
6. See VI, ch. 8.
7. Jn. 20:19-21. See V, ch. 1, no. 12.
8. Again she changed what she had previously written, "those who have consummated marriage," to the present reading.
9. 1 Co. 6:17. This text from St. Paul and the application were written between the lines. Teresa first wrote and then crossed out: "...we are made one spirit with God if we love Him; he doesn't say that we are joined with Him...but are made one spirit with Him."
10. Ph. 1:21. Teresa cited the passage in her own form of Latin: *Mibivere Cristus es mori lucrum*.
11. See V, ch. 3, note 1.
12. In no. 4.
13. Jn. 20:19-21.
14. Lk. 7:50.
15. Jn. 17:21.
16. Jn. 17:20, 23.
17. Allusion to Lk. 21:33.
18. In no. 3.
19. In ch. 3, nos. 3 and 6; ch. 4, no. 2.
20. Probably in V, ch. 2, nos. 7-11.
21. In no. 4; see also IV, ch. 2.
22. In no. 9.

CHAPTER 3

1. Teresa numbers only the first two effects; the others are present in the midst of a series of digressions and commentary. Here is a list of these effects: 1) forgetfulness of self (in no. 2); 2) desire to suffer (no. 4); 3) deep interior joy in persecution (no. 5); 4) desire to serve (no. 6); 5) great detachment (no. 8); 6) no fear of the devil's deceptions (no. 10); and finally a recapitulation in no. 13.
2. In ch. 2, nos. 4-5.
3. An allusion to the grace of spiritual marriage. See ch. 2, no. 1; *Spir. Test.*, 31.
4. She is referring to the experiences spoken of in the sixth dwelling place; see particularly ch. 11.
5. In VI, ch. 2.
6. In VI, ch. 2, no. 1; ch. 11, no. 2.
7. Ac. 9:6.
8. In no. 8.
9. In ch. 2, nos. 3 and 10.
10. In ch. 2, nos. 5-6 and 9.
11. 1 K. 6:7.
12. In Teresa's terminology "not lost" is the equivalent of not being enraptured. In this dwelling place the faculties remain in amazement but not ecstatically suspended.
13. Allusion to Sg. 1:2; there follows a series of biblical allusions to: Ps. 42:2; Rv. 21:3; Gn. 8:8-12.
14. Allusion to Lk. 18:13.
15. In no. 6.

CHAPTER 4

1. In ch. 3, nos. 2-10.
2. 1 K. 11. See III, ch. 1, nos. 1-4.
3. Ps. 112:1.
4. In VI, ch. 9, nos. 16-17; see also ch. 1, no. 7.
5. Allusion to 1 Th. 2:9.
6. This *quo vadis* legend appeared in the Carmelite breviary, used in the time of St. Teresa, on the feast of St. Peter (June 29).
7. In V, ch. 3, nos. 11.
8. There is a Teresian proverb that reads in Spanish: *La virtud se ha de ver no en los rincones sino en medio de las ocasiones*. It might go like this in English: "Look for virtue not in corners away from the din but right amidst the occasions of sin." See *Foundations*, ch. 5, no. 15.
9. In I, ch. 2, nos. 8-9, 11 and 13.

10. In ch. 3, nos. 3, 5-8.
11. Ps. 18:26.
12. Allusion to Sg. 2:4.
13. Allusion to 1 K. 19:10. The shield of the Carmelite order takes as its motto the prophet Elijah's words: *Zelo zelatus sum pro Domino Deo exercituum*.
14. Lk. 10:38-42.
15. Allusion to Lk. 7:37-38.
16. See *Way of Perfection*, chs. 1-3; *Meditations*, ch. 7.
17. In III, ch. 2, no. 13.

EPILOGUE

1. This epilogue was sent in the form of a letter along with the original manuscript to the Discalced Carmelite nuns in Seville.
2. In Prologue, no. 1.
3. Allusion to Gn. 1:26. See I, ch. 1, no. 1.
4. That is, Nov. 29, 1577, close to six months after she had begun writing on June 2nd of that same year. See Prologue, no. 3.

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Castle Imagery (Cont'd)

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Castle Imagery (Cont'd)

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volume three

the collected works of
ST. TERESA OF AVILA

translated by

kieran kavanaugh, o.c.d. otilio rodriguez, o.c.d.

The Collected Works
of
St. Teresa of Avila

VOLUME THREE

*The Collected Works
of
St. Teresa of Avila*

VOLUME THREE

The Book of Her Foundations

Minor Works

The Constitutions—On Making the Visitation

A Satirical Critique—Response to a Spiritual Challenge—Poetry

Translated by

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and

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*The Book of Her
Foundations*

THE BOOK OF HER FOUNDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

ST. TERESA WROTE her extraordinary story *The Book of Her Life*¹ under obligation to her confessors and spiritual directors hopeful that they would come to understand and enlighten her about the path along which the Lord was leading her. Interwoven in her account were the simple biographical data of everyday experience and the exceptional data of the intense inner life that resulted when God began to pour out His mystical graces on her. As she delved into her past, her narration grew into something more than plain history and became a witnessing to the realities of the interior life and their transforming power. The story of Teresa's life evolved into a story of God's mercy.

Teresa's story, however, did not end there. Hardly knowing where to turn with the burning love that resulted from her raptures in God, she became obsessed with desires to serve "His Majesty," as she referred to her Lord. Her first brave attempts to do something about these desires are told dramatically in five of the final chapters of her *Life*.

Although the foundation of the new community of St. Joseph's brought much happiness to Teresa, love's desires were not entirely appeased. In *The Way of Perfection*² the foundress told about the pain she felt over the troubles of the Church in Europe. Now in her *Foundations* she tells that she was further tormented when the Franciscan missionary Alonzo Maldonado came to St. Joseph's. Recently returned from Mexico, he brought to the monastery grille his tale of the millions who had never heard of Jesus Christ. In Teresa's mind there could be no

worse fate. Moreover, she thought that the greatest service one could render the Lord was to bring souls to Him. This woman, who as a child ran away from home to become a martyr in the land of the Moors, now thought not so much of martyrdom as of bringing others to Christ. "When we read in the lives of the saints that they converted souls, I feel much greater devotion, tenderness, and envy than over all the martyrdoms they suffered" (1,7).³ Wrestling with these afflictions of love and complaining to her Lord of her powerlessness to convert her desires into deeds, she suddenly heard the Lord speak to her: "Wait a little, daughter, and you will see great things" (1,8).

In 1567, the prior general of the Carmelites, Giovanni Baptista Rossi, whom Teresa in Castilian fashion called Rubeo, made his visitation of the Carmelite houses in Spain. Eagerly, but with some fearful apprehensions, the new foundress arranged to meet with him so that she could explain what she had done and manifest her compelling desires.

In reality the meeting turned out to be a happy one for both Teresa and her prior general. Delighted with the spirituality of this enthusiastic nun and the contemplative manner of living that she had established within the context of Carmel, Rubeo not only approved but asked for more. He wanted Teresa to found other similar monasteries and provided her with the official letters she would need for the endeavor. Much consoled, Teresa felt nonetheless helpless despite her official papers: "Here I was, a poor discalced nun, without help from anywhere — only from the Lord — weighed down with patent letters and good desires" (3,6). But with those desires, which could not be put aside, and with help "only from the Lord," this poor discalced nun went on to found personally fourteen more Carmels in addition to St. Joseph's in Avila; two other foundations she directed at a distance. In all, at the time of her death, seventeen of her little Carmels for women had been founded: Medina del Campo (1567); Malagón and Valladolid (1568); Toledo and Pastrana (1569); Salamanca (1570); Alba de Tormes (1571); Segovia (1574); Beas and Seville (1575); Caravaca (1576); Villanueva de la Jara and Palencia (1580); Soria (1581); Granada and Burgos (1582). She also instituted her way of life among the

friars and played an active role in both the initial recruitment and the foundations themselves at Duruelo (1568) and Pastrana (1569).

Origin and Composition

On August 25, 1573, while staying in Salamanca to assist her nuns there in the irksome task of finding a suitable house to buy, Teresa began composing the story of her foundations (Prol. 3). The idea for this new book seems to have derived from the Jesuit Jerónimo Ripalda, formerly skeptical of Teresa but now her friend and confessor. Having read her *Life* and its account of the first foundation, Ripalda urged the foundress to enlarge her story and write as well the history of the seven monasteries she had founded since the completion of her first book; she could tell, too, about the first monasteries of her friars. Insisting that "it would be of service to our Lord," an irresistible argument for Teresa, Ripalda may, on the other hand, only have been encouraging his spiritual daughter to follow a grace the Lord had previously given her. In February, 1570, the Lord had appeared to her pressing her to make as many foundations as she could and also to write about them.⁴

Teresa's reluctance to follow the Lord's urgings that she write about her foundations could have been due to her fear that others might then think they were her own accomplishments, an idea she disavows. The work was God's work. In addition, she dreaded taking up the task because of the lack of quiet time for writing. Tangled business matters, endless correspondence, persistent bad health, certainly none of these contributed any spark of enthusiasm for the project. In the end, only the thought of obedience to her confessor provided her with the strength needed to begin.

The first free moments she found came during the period from the end of August, 1573, until March, 1574, while she was living in Salamanca before leaving to make the foundation in Segovia. Not knowing how many chapters she wrote during these months, we can at least surmise that she wrote no more

than nine. What she tells us is only that she set the work aside because of duties. But the contents of chapter 10, the story of Doña Casilda de Padilla's vocation, could not have been written until later. Although chapters 10 through 12 seem to have been written in Valladolid — Teresa speaks of not being "here" (11, 3) at the time of Casilda's escape from her family to the cloister — nothing certain can be stated about where or when the remaining chapters were composed. Once Teresa completed chapter 19, her responsibility of obedience to Father Ripalda was fulfilled. She had neither the time nor the convenience for writing more.

Father Gracián entered the scene next and firmly insisted that Madre Teresa finish her story. Her pleas and objections about how tired the work made her were met only with further encouragement and the advice to write just in snatches and to do the best she could (27, 22).

In July, 1576, Lorenzo de Cepeda, Teresa's brother, received a letter from his sister, now a foundress, asking him to send her a box and some documents and also paper containing details surrounding the foundation in Alba.⁵ The Father Visitor, she says, "has ordered me to finish the *Foundations*." In a letter to Gracián, October 5, 1576, she announces that she is going to begin writing the rest of the story. Chapters 20–27 were written not so much in snatches but probably rapidly within a month. Judging by the colophon appearing at the end of chapter 27, Teresa definitely thought she was now, November 14, 1576, done with the annoying task. The stormy opposition that her work as foundress was undergoing did not allow her to envision any further foundations about which she would be obliged to write.

But after the storm, between 1580 and her death in 1582, she added five more, in all of which she personally took part with the exception of Granada. Four more chapters had to be written. Although the story of her experiences in each of these final foundations could have been written immediately after each had been made, more probably she finished this whole last section while in Burgos. Perhaps, too, the needed urgings came from Gracián, if not by his words at least by his presence. In the closing lengthy chapter which recounts the foundation of

Burgos, with its interminable troubles, Teresa's handwriting clearly demonstrates her state of exhaustion.

The General Content

The Jesuit Ripalda's desire was that just as Teresa had recorded in *The Book of Her Life* the events, sometimes fiery, surrounding the foundation of St. Joseph's in Avila so too she should record the many events surrounding her other foundations. And this is the main thrust of Teresa's new book. First and foremost, the work is a narrative of the happenings involved in each foundation. The chronological order in which houses were founded provides the general course along which the narrative runs.

But the narration of facts is not the Mother Foundress's sole interest. Once having compared herself to a parrot that knows only how to repeat what it has heard,⁶ she confesses her tendency to be ever repeating what she has to say about prayer. In this work, too, encouraged by Ripalda, she expands her account so as to turn again to the theme of prayer and related topics.

Chapters 4 through 8 constitute the longest interruption to the history of the foundations itself. In them, after having declared in a matter-of-fact way that most of the nuns in the houses she had founded were experiencing perfect contemplation (a statement perplexing enough to Gracián to make him tamper with the autograph) and that each house had one or more familiar with raptures, visions, and revelations (4, 8),⁷ she gives some pertinent counsels to prioresses flowing from her own observation of what had been happening spiritually in her monasteries. These counsels deal with: the need, at times, out of obedience or charity, to set aside contemplation for the sake of the active works of service (ch. 5); a delightful absorption lasting for hours that is nonetheless deceptive and that stems from bodily weakness caused by austerities (ch. 6); melancholy, the general term used at the time for emotional and mental illnesses (ch. 7); a safe method of procedure in the experience of visions and revelations (ch. 8). Accompanying the counsels on

these topics are case histories that Teresa had come to know first-hand or had heard from others.

Further on in her work, she gives some counsels to prioresses on the need for discretion in government and in the practices of mortification (18, 6-13). And scattered throughout her account are the shorter instructions and motherly exhortations concerning the spiritual life to which the narrative gives rise. Examples of these would be her exhortations about fidelity to the way of life she established, or her instructions about not refusing sincere applicants who lack the funds for a dowry through no fault of their own (27, 11-12; 29, 32-33).

All in all, there is reason to believe that Madre Teresa found it much less tedious to give counsels about the spiritual life than to go into the various historical details of her foundations. At one point, when treating of the spiritual life, she firmly declares that "even though writing about such a matter may be a tiresome thing to do, it doesn't tire me" (6, 8).

Over and above these important and insightful digressions from her story, she introduces here and there throughout her work many biographical sketches and anecdotes, some of them quite lengthy. These are told for the sake of edification and show some of the traits of early hagiography, the kind Teresa was accustomed to reading. Among her sketches we find stories of a girl's vocation or descriptions of a nun's exemplary life. We meet Doña Casilda de Padilla (10, 8-ch. 11), Beatriz de la Encarnación (ch. 12), Catalina Sandoval y Godínez (22, 4-24), Beatriz de la Madre de Dios (26, 2-15), and some nuns from the community in Toledo (16, 1-4). In another vein, we read the account of Teresa Layz who brought the nuns to Alba de Tormes (20, 2-14) and the long, bewildering story of Catalina de Cardona who brought the friars to a cave near Villanueva de la Jara (28, 21-36).

The friars, too, are represented in portraits of Ambrosio Mariano (17, 7-15) and Jerónimo Gracián (ch. 23), and in shorter sketches of Antonio de Heredia (3, 16), St. John of the Cross (3, 17), and Nicolás Doria (30, 5).

If many of the carefully described details of the stories puzzle the twentieth-century reader, one might remember that Teresa's own life story is most remarkable and extraordinary. At the same

time, however, the author wanted to be sure of her facts. Some of them she herself was disinclined to believe. Of Catalina de Sandoval's illnesses she checked out what she heard: "Had I not been informed by the doctor and those who were in the house, or by other persons . . . it would not have been unusual for me to think that some of this was exaggerated" (22, 23). In telling about the incredible fasts of Catalina de Cardona, she suddenly feels she must assure her reader: "This fact is very certain, for even the friars who are there testify to it" (28, 27). The abuse suffered by Beatriz de la Madre de Dios so shocked Teresa that she confesses she can find no rational explanation for it (26, 9).

Many other characters about whom Teresa makes brief comments enter the drama at their proper times. She takes particular care to mention benefactors, and not merely for the sake of edification but also that her nuns will remember to pray for them. After speaking of the prior of the Carthusian monastery near Seville, she states that she mentions him so that the nuns will remember him in their prayers, and she adds: "it is right that you pray for him and for all those, living and dead, who have helped us" (25, 9).

Two principal concerns about her story weigh on Teresa's mind, and she manifests them at the outset: she must be completely truthful, and the glory and praise must go to God (Prol. 3). Regarding the latter, a fear pervades her book that a reader might think the accomplishments were hers. Whether she succeeds in including every important historical fact and excluding the unimportant does not worry her. Her concern is that God be praised for His works. At one point in the midst of her account, she seems suddenly taken with fear that someone might attribute the successes of her work to herself or someone else. In her mind, "only His Majesty could have raised the work to what it now is" (13, 7).

Indeed, the protagonist in her work is God. Like the contemporary discoverers of new worlds, she also discovers, she enthusiastically searches out and beholds God's efficacious action lying beneath, yet always transcending, the historical facts; further, she learns that He is deeply involved and committed to the historical process even in its minutest details.

Teresa, herself a lover of solitude, now entered more visibly, so to speak, this historical process. Her strength to do so derived from the thought that Jesus Christ out of obedience came from the bosom of the Father to become our slave. The troubles she would get caught up in would be occasions, she reflected, for showing her where virtue was wanting. "How could it be known whether a man were valiant if he were not seen in battle?" (5, 15). And besides, who more than she knew that the true lover loves the Beloved always and everywhere? Then there is her further important teaching for all who must live the active life that "it is not the length of time spent in prayer that benefits one; when the time is spent as well in good works, it is a great help in preparing the soul for the enkindling of love" (5, 17).

The Mother Foundress with her classic determination, her *muy determinada determinación*, embraced the new work God had given her. She quickly made friends wherever she thought she might find help for God's service. She had to decide which cities and towns presented the best opportunities for her foundations and which sites would offer the most advantages. She had to raise money, look for property and houses to rent or buy, and recruit nuns who could endure with all the needed virtues the inevitable problems accompanying her new monasteries, nuns whom she could trust to carry on in her spirit once she went on to another foundation. She had to learn flawless tact in dealing with bishops and others in authority. She had to become an expert in sifting through the legal complexities that surrounded contracts; sometimes the negotiations continued for months and even years. Always careful to avoid whatever might instigate a lawsuit, she was at times, to her dismay, drawn right into one. She was forced to become both an expert in the intricacies of money management and an attentive organizer and planner. She had to search out furnishings for her new foundations and look after the involved travel preparations. In a word, she was thrown into the world of people, money, and property, and all the unwelcome conflicts these are liable to bring forth, especially when individual or collective egos are threatened and in need of being shored up and defended.

To find God in all things, in troublesome clashes as well as in

the hermitage—or, in her proverbial statement, even “among the pots and pans” (5, 8)—this was the art she was forced to master; and in finding Him she found the One who could do what she could not. “A useless woman as helpless as I well understood that she couldn’t do anything” (2, 3).

After the prior general had given her his encouragement and all the needed permissions, she was left with a keen sense of helplessness, with no way of accomplishing her good desires. But the Lord who gave her the good desires also made it possible for her later to exclaim: “O greatness of God! How You manifest Your power in giving courage to an ant!” (2, 7).

This power of God showed itself as well in the lives of her daughters. After describing the exceptionally mortified and virtuous life and death of Beatriz de la Encarnación, she reminds us that these stories of nuns living in her houses are told so that “we may all praise the Lord who in this way lets His magnificent riches show forth in us weak, little women” (12, 10).

Another character playing a major role in her story and sharing center stage is the adversary, the devil, relentlessly plotting and struggling to spoil the Lord’s work. In Teresa’s *Life* readers see him trying to impede her wary soul through the bad influences of the surrounding society, through inner cunning, deceptive suggestions, false visions, and even bodily attacks. Now in the *Foundations* the devil appears as the agent and inspirer of the adverse happenings that obstruct the establishment of her new communities of both nuns and friars. At the outset, chronicling the first foundation in this book, that of Medina del Campo, Teresa voices this theme in meeting her first bothersome setback, when the Augustinian friars threatened a lawsuit against the nuns if they tried to rent the available house: “When You, Lord, want to give courage, how little do all contradictions matter! Rather, it seems I am encouraged by them, thinking that since the devil is beginning to be disturbed the Lord will be served in that monastery” (3, 4).⁸ In addition, the devil seeks to deceive Teresa’s nuns, using as his tools melancholy, disturbing thoughts, and false visions. Some he may tempt at the hour of their death, but the Lord promises through special favor to protect Teresa’s nuns at this time (16, 4).

Though angels are hardly mentioned, devils are everywhere. They even follow one into the desert, appearing as huge vicious dogs or as snakes (28, 27). But the devil seemingly keeps busier in some environments. The city of Seville, because of its climate, its riches, and its opulent lifestyle provided an appropriate setting for the demon's work. "I have heard it said that the devils have greater leeway there to tempt souls, for God must grant it to them. They certainly afflicted me there, for I never felt more pusillanimous or cowardly" (25, 1). When the house into which the nuns had just moved almost went up in flames, Teresa blamed the devil who felt "so angry at seeing another house of God . . . that he wanted somehow to get revenge" (25, 14).

The disagreements within the order that put an end for a while to her foundations might have arisen, Teresa conjectures, because the devil was displeased that so many houses were being founded where our Lord was being served. In fact, the devil was so cunning that had it not been for the king everything would have collapsed (27, 20; 29, 31).

At times the Mother Foundress herself became the victim. The devil would confuse her when she was trying to make a decision, or make her feel great repugnance toward going ahead with her work (28, 14; 31, 4). In sum, the devil set snares and stirred up unrest and opposition (29, 9; 31, 14, 22, 31).

The spiritual tradition deeply rooted among the people, particularly from the middle ages to the seventeenth century, told how the devil might act anywhere in the world, among any persons, at any hour of the day or night, but always and only with the permission of God, as St. Gregory affirmed in his commentary on Job. One could happen upon nests of devils in shadowy places and dens. Even some liturgical formulas reflect these sentiments.

In her writings Teresa mirrors these popular notions. But she does not embrace any and every popular idea. She never suggests, for example, resorting to the use of superstitious practices to ward off the devil. One preventive was the burning of bad-smelling aromatics like sulphur, St. John's-Wort, or galbanum, with the hope of making the devil change direction or chasing him away. Her methods were prayer, "the place where the Lord

gives light to understand truths" (10, 13),⁹ and the practice of Christian virtues like charity, humility, and obedience. In addition she made diligent inquiry from confessors, learned men, and others so as to discern what might be for God's greater service.¹⁰ Once the latter became clear, she threw herself into the task with determination despite feelings of fear and doubt; "God wants no more than our determination so that he may do everything Himself" (28, 19). Then the devil can do no more than what the Lord allows for the sake of a greater good as in the case of the foundation in Burgos: "But, O Lord, how obvious it is that You are powerful, for the very scheme the devil used to prevent it, You used to do something better" (31, 31).¹¹

What might one think of such unsparing talk of the devil? Is there here nothing more than a popular personification of the forces of evil? The difficulty lies in discerning what precisely comes from the human realm and what from that suprahuman realm of "principalities and powers."¹² Though Teresa speaks popularly about the devil, the essential point she makes is by no means incidental to her story nor is it merely an outdated element of sixteenth-century thought. The essential point is that through Jesus Christ she feels liberated, free of worries about all interference coming from either human or demonic powers, and in her efforts to serve Jesus she discovers that in the end He is always victorious, never fails those who seek to serve Him (18, 1; 27, 11, 20). Her work is His not hers. "Therefore, it is often made clear that it is not I who do anything in these foundations, but the work is His who is all powerful in everything" (29, 5).¹³

As for the style of this book, it is that of the Mother Foundress speaking to her daughters; not so much writing in the way she speaks, but speaking by means of writing. In her *Constitutions*, she gives some counsels about recreation and, apparently trying to compensate for a lack of diversion in their life, reminds her nuns that God will give some the grace to entertain others.¹⁴ Teresa herself undoubtedly belonged to this group of entertainers. Surely the nuns enjoyed listening to her stories, the array of characters, great and small, the ever-present thicket of troubles, the drama with its transcendental dimensions in which His Majesty, finally, comes out always the victor. When we read this

book, we are as it were invited to a community recreation period in which Teresa entertains. The nuns who knew their Mother Foundress always agreed in their testimony with Ana de Jesús (Jimena) who declared that in reading the works of Madre Teresa she felt she was listening to the Madre speak.¹⁵

Partly because of our remoteness from sixteenth-century Spain, partly because of Teresa's story itself, at least as strange as fiction if not stranger, much of the drama or deep and practical spirituality that lies beneath the surface of the lines or within an environment so removed from our own could go unperceived without some historical and cultural background in addition to the information supplied in the notes. But providing such background calls for an expansion of this introduction which at the same time presents the danger of making it too lengthy. The reader uninterested in this background may prefer to skip over to the final section dealing with the autograph. In any case, some of the information presented here can serve as introductory material also for the other Teresian writings contained in this volume as well as for those included in the first two volumes. In like manner, the introductions of the first two volumes contain information that can also contribute to the understanding of this work.

The Order of Carmel

A paragraph from a sermon preached in a church at Avignon, France, in 1342 expresses well the thinking that was still common in Teresa's time and explains many of her references to the order of Carmel:

"You are wondering why I refer to the Carmelites as the special and ancient order of our Lady but if you were to know the reasons, you would wonder no more. Trustworthy histories of Elijah and Elisha tell us how these two often dwelt on Mount Carmel, three leagues distant from Nazareth, the city of our Lady. And saintly men continued to live there in solitude, until the time of our Saviour. At that time, the hermits were converted

by the preaching of the apostles. On one side of the mountain, they built a Church or oratory in honor of the Holy Virgin, in a spot which, they had been told, she often frequented in her life, with her maiden companions. For this reason, they were the first among all religious orders to be called children of the Blessed Mary of Mount Carmel. From the early days of the Church, they worked with alacrity to preach the Gospel and in later times they were given a rule of life by John, Patriarch of Jerusalem, based on that of St. Paulinus and St. Basil. Thus, quite justly, this Order enjoys the honor of being the oldest of them all."¹⁶

Not included in this little summary was the legend behind the nuns, which went so far as to say that the wife of Elijah founded a similar institute for women. Later, after Teresa's times, the order of Carmel, without a critical sense of history or a definite founder, got caught up in the challenge to prove its age-old traditions. The signal that sounded the beginning of a literary battle lasting thirty years was the assertion, in 1668, by the Jesuit Daniel Papenbroch, a well known Bollandist scholar, that the Carmelite order was founded in 1155 A.D. by St. Berthold who was identified with the white-haired monk from Calabria mentioned by Phocas. So harsh, unrelenting, and disedifying did the battle become that in 1698 the Holy See imposed silence on both parties. Later, in 1725, when the Carmelite order triumphantly installed in St. Peter's in Rome its celebrated statue of Elijah as the order's founder, its apologists considered themselves the winners.

What can be affirmed historically is that there was a school of prophets on Carmel, that the prophet Elijah undoubtedly had an impressive impact on the hermits and monks of the early Church, and that Christian hermits resided on Mt. Carmel from a very early date.¹⁷

Carmelites from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century thought that *The Institution of the First Monks* was the rule given to their forefathers around the year 400 by John, the 44th Patriarch of Jerusalem. These monks, it was supposed, dutifully followed this rule until receiving the formula of life or rule written by Albert of Jerusalem in the thirteenth century. Yet even though it is now commonly recognized that the *Institution* in its

present form cannot be dated much earlier than the fourteenth century and was not originally written in Greek, the language of its alleged author, the text did give Carmelites their manual par excellence of spirituality.

The unknown author of this work describes the way toward "prophetic perfection" and the purpose of the religious eremitical life. By means of an allegoric commentary on the biblical account of the prophet Elijah, he explains, in eight chapters, the eremitical-contemplative ideal, which lies in the attainment of a two-fold end: first, to offer God a heart holy and pure of all stain of actual sin (through one's own efforts assisted by grace); second, to taste at times, by divine gift, God's sweetness in the depths of one's heart and to experience in one's soul the power of His divine presence. God promised this latter to Elijah through the words: "You shall drink from this brook."¹⁸

The order's devotion to our Lady grew stronger through another tradition that in 1251, a time of hardship for Carmelites, she appeared to the prior general, Simon Stock, to encourage him and give him the scapular as a pledge of her protection. The oldest written account of this vision comes 150 years after the alleged event, a gap considered too wide for certainty especially in light of the medieval fondness for clothing a spiritual or theological belief in a story. What is more, it now appears certain that the prior general from 1247-1256 was not Simon Stock but a certain Godfrey, whose name appears as prior general on recently discovered legal documents.

Teresa found inspiration in all these cherished Carmelite traditions of her time and speaks about the life of our holy fathers of the past, the antiquity of the order, the order as being our Lady's order, and the habit as being our Lady's habit.

She tells us that prior to his decision to enter the Carmelites Padre Gracián used to pass his recreation hours pouring over accounts about the antiquity and greatness of the Carmelite order (23, 3). One wonders if the writing of history in those times might also have been a form of recreation. Not until the nineteenth century did historians begin to stress the necessity of establishing facts through meticulous research and discriminating criticism. Parenthetically, it is worth affirming that for

Teresa writing the history of her foundations was a burden and she took great pains to avoid giving any false information. "In this work that is being written for the praise of our Lord, any untruthfulness would cause me great scrupulosity. I believe that such a thing would involve not only a waste of time but deception concerning the works of God" (Prol. 3). But as for dates, she warns, we must be somewhat suspicious and think in terms of more or less (25, 4). Teresa, in the end, sums up the story of Gracián's vocation in characteristic fashion: "And this glorious Virgin was the reason he received her habit and became so fond of the order" (23, 4).

The actual date of the formal beginning of the Carmelite order or the real circumstances that brought the hermits together near the fountain of Elijah on Mount Carmel may never be uncovered. Nonetheless, sometime around 1210, a definite community had formed there and decided to petition Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who resided at Acre, to give them a formula of life. In its initial stage, the simple rule written by Albert was destined for hermits and given limited approval by Pope Honorius III in 1226. The hermits became known as the hermit brothers of St. Mary of Mount Carmel, and they kept a little church there dedicated to our Lady. Excavations carried out in 1958 have uncovered the ruins of the church and the nearby cells of the hermits.

Owing to the precarious position of Christians in the Holy Land from 1229 onward, the hermits decided to make foundations in the West. To organize these foundations on a sound basis, a chapter was summoned at Aylesford, England, in 1247. A decision with far-reaching consequences was made at this chapter to petition the pope for changes in the rule. By the papal bull *Quae honorem*, September 4, 1247, the Rule of St. Albert was mitigated and became canonically a rule having the same status as those of the other religious rules already approved, a necessity at that time because the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) had forbidden new rules.¹⁹ This, then, was the version of the rule that Teresa thought was the primitive rule. It allowed the Carmelites to live according to the new forms of Religious life that came into vogue with the institution of the mendicant

orders. Though the alterations made in the text of St. Albert's rule were slight, the results were extensive: houses were founded in cities and towns; the cenobitical form of life was developed, and external apostolates were gradually introduced.

In 1432, the Carmelites petitioned the Holy See for further changes, claiming that in some respects the rule was too strict and impeded the advancement of the order. By the bull *Romani pontificis*, dated February 15, 1432, Pope Eugene IV authorized the Carmelites to eat meat three days a week and to walk about at certain times in their churches, cloisters, and grounds, thus not having to remain continually in their cells. These concessions amounted to a last stage in the process whereby the Carmelites became mendicants and are what Teresa refers to when speaking of the mitigated rule. Though never written into the rule, they seem to have had an unhappy negative effect on the order since by some they were viewed as a symbol of betrayal, a relinquishment of the contemplative ideal.

Up to the fifteenth century the order had no monasteries of nuns, nor had it felt concern about this. With nunneries would go responsibilities: the bothersome care of construction and repair of buildings, the safeguards against fire and theft, the service of the church attached to the monastery, and spiritual assistance to the nuns. Blessed John Soreth was the prior general who in the fifteenth century took the feared step and introduced the sisterhood into the life of Carmel by obtaining the papal bull *Cum nulla*, 1452, which bestowed authorization for receiving women into the Carmelite order as nuns.

Soreth, however, never traveled to Spain. The development of communities of Carmelite women there took place apart from his intervention, with the result that the nature of the life of a Carmelite nun in Spain varied from place to place. At first a *beaterio*, a community of devout women affiliated with the order of Carmel and wearing a habit, the Incarnation at Avila was founded in 1479. In 1515, the year of Teresa's birth, the Sisters moved into a much larger edifice they had built outside the walls of Avila. With this move they also introduced a form of religious life. Though large and spacious, the new building was anything but luxurious. Only a bare tile roof covered the church,

and the makeshift roofing in the choir let the snow in winter fall through onto the breviaries, and the sun in the summer shine through so as to provide light enough for reading even with the shutters closed.

The immediate increase in the number of nuns soon turned the building into a busy world with unfortunate economic effects. The poverty became so alarming that the nuns had only bread to eat and the construction of the monastery and church were by necessity left unfinished. Despite its meager means, the community became a refuge for ladies from the nobility. They entered sometimes to save face in society rather than out of a desire to live the religious life. These ladies, with the title of *Doña* and with their dowries, were each given a special suite of rooms with their own kitchens, and they were permitted to keep in their company maids and lay relatives and friends. Even children and young girls were allowed to live in the monastery, some girls receiving the habit as early as age twelve. Much bustling about, socializing, and distraction were the result. With their special privileges, the *Doñas* became a source of injustices, class distinctions, and jealousies. It should not be forgotten that Teresa herself at the Incarnation bore the title *Doña*, lived in a suite of rooms, and at times shared them with her relatives.

From the prior general Rubeo's visit to the Incarnation in 1567, we learn that there were one hundred forty-four nuns with the black veil (in solemn profession), that there was only enough food to feed the community for a third of the year, that the monastery was in debt, that the maximum number of nuns sustainable would be sixty, and that the unfinished church was about ready to collapse. Forced by hunger, the nuns had to go out for help to friends and relatives and get permission to keep their own money. At one time between 1560-1565 more than fifty nuns were living outside in the homes of relatives and benefactors. Parlor visits were encouraged as a help toward cultivating benefactors and receiving alms.

From Rubeo's visitation we also gather information about some of the human problems besetting the nuns. There was disagreement over confessors, some nuns wanting only friars from the order, others desiring a wider choice; some objected to

preaching by Jesuits since these religious priests would sometimes discuss the nuns' private and "insignificant questions" from the pulpit; others suggested that the Carmelite friars prepare themselves better by reading some spiritual books; a sour complaint was made that the local prior was a disgrace to the whole order.²⁰

The many obstacles to a life of recollection and prayer made little headway, though, in wearing down a large, vigorous group of devoted and excellent nuns within the community. Teresa, in her *Life*, extols the many nuns at the Incarnation "who are so good and serve the Lord so authentically that He cannot keep from favoring them."²¹ Often showing her esteem for the Incarnation, she left it with a certain reluctance when beginning her new foundation. In fact, she later recruited as many as thirty-four nuns from the Incarnation for her new houses. Out of this number, twenty-two nuns remained; the others, usually for reasons of health, returned to their former monastery. When complaints were made that she was robbing the Incarnation of all their good nuns, Teresa replied that there were still more than forty nuns there who would be capable of founding a religious order.

In chapter 21 of her *Foundations*, Teresa relates how she herself after making the foundations in Salamanca and Alba de Tormes was appointed prioress of the Incarnation. This appointment was made in 1571 by the Dominican apostolic commissary, Pedro Fernández, who hoped that she could bring about some reforms and find some remedy for the community's economic troubles. She called on her new, discalced friar John of the Cross to come as confessor and spiritual director to assist her. In Fernández's view, the step taken was a highly successful one; the community at the Incarnation under the guidance of these two leaders experienced a complete spiritual renewal and was liberated from a number of its problems.

Reform in Spain

In fourteenth and fifteenth century Spain the word "reform" came to symbolize undefined longings for change within the ecclesiastical structure and for more spiritual solutions to problems.

The religious and secular clergy had accumulated large properties and enjoyed exemption from taxes levied by the Crown. Benefices by which the clergy, including religious, received their livelihood, were the source of much abuse and ever recurring disputes. Owing to the total upheaval produced by the Black Plague within the life of the monasteries, members were forced to relinquish the common life and the observance of their rules and constitutions. The practice of buying endowed offices, privileges, and academic degrees did not take long to follow once income and personal possessions were allowed. When groups formed to renounce these dubious privileges and customs and return to the authentic or "primitive" spirit of their founders, they were given the name "observants," in contradistinction to "conventuals" who represented the former groups. Strong communities of observants arose among the Benedictines, Cistercians, Franciscans, Augustinians, and Dominicans. On account of their exemplary reforms, academic as well as moral, these observants quickly gained the veneration of the people.

When in 1474 the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, initiated their reform movement, that reform already had a history in this return to the observance. The Monarchs seized on this movement and in adopting it sought to convert conventuals into observants. The spirituality of the observants put emphasis on austerity, the ascetical practice of silence, and on recollection both interior and exterior.

Among the Franciscan observants was the austere Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros whom the queen had taken for her confessor. After Alexander VI, in 1491, had authorized the Catholic Monarchs to take over the reform of the religious orders, Cisneros saw his opportunity and launched into the reform work with unflagging vigor, continuing in the same vein after his appointment to the see of Toledo in 1495. In the face of dogged opposition, he began with his own Franciscan order, imposing a strict observance of the rule. Some thousand Franciscans refusing to yield moved to Africa. Cisneros's reform then spread to the Dominicans, Benedictines, and Jeronimites, finally broadening its reach to include the secular clergy and laity as well.

Throughout the reign of the Emperor Charles V, 1516-1556,

the effort to maintain governmental control of the reform continued, and the movement was assured at least of support if not of new initiatives.

With Philip II, king of Spain from 1556–1598, the process of Spanish reform underwent intense change. Terrified at the thought of heresy entering Spain, Philip's actions show that in his heart he considered religion too serious a matter to be left to anyone else, including the pope, but himself. He aimed to make of the Spanish monarchy a strong fortress against whose walls the heresies seizing hold of Europe would pound to no effect. The inquisition, set up by the Catholic Monarchs to promote a common faith, was turned more or less into a department of state.

Everything that came from Rome met with an attitude of reserve. Neither the king nor the royal court could manage to believe in the seriousness of the proposals for reform decreed by the Council of Trent. Insisting on his right to scrutinize papal bulls and, if necessary, to forbid their publication in his dominions, the king delayed publication of the decrees of the Council of Trent for two years. Nor were they published without a proviso guaranteeing the crown's continuing influence in ecclesiastical jurisdiction and episcopal appointments.

The conciliar fathers had themselves set about a program of reform that could serve for the whole Church. But the measures they worked out needed the support of Rome for their efficacy. Spain, with little confidence in what Rome could achieve, took matters into its own hands. A council was established in the court of Madrid to oversee the reform of religious orders according to Spanish ideas. What were considered in Spain as inviolable privileges of the crown were considered in Rome as acts of rebellion and unwarranted disrespect of papal rights. Ironically, the monarch least esteemed in the Vatican during some pontificates was the king of Spain, known by the title "the Catholic king." Teresa herself reflects the popular opinion, referring to him as "our Catholic king"; nor does she even flinch from calling him "our holy king" (28, 6; 29, 30–31).

Failing in several attempts to gain briefs from Rome enabling him to carry out a reform of religious orders more demanding than that required by the Council of Trent, Philip II finally won

out with a new pope who had been his candidate. In 1566 and 1567 with the briefs *Maxime cuperemus* and *Superioribus mensibus*, Pius V gave his nod to the suppression of the conventual communities and the introduction of observant life. In the interval between the time of the first foundation in Avila, about which Teresa wrote in her *Life* and in which she shows the influence of previous Spanish reform movements, and the other foundations described in this book, the authorities in Spain began to apply the work of the Council of Trent with the added measures imposed by the royal power. Within this new, more complicated turn of events Madre Teresa set off on her colorful, adventurous journeys through Spain.²²

The Teresian Communities

“Whoever has not begun the practice of prayer, I beg for the love of the Lord not to go without so great a good.”²³ Even before the founding of St. Joseph’s, Teresa’s convictions of prayer’s transforming powers had grown so strong that others could not resist feeling drawn to her. Experiencing their own inner urgings toward a life of deeper prayer, they approached Doña Teresa obliging her to turn her rooms at the Incarnation into a meeting place for spiritual conversation. María Ocampo, a relative of Teresa’s one day half in jest spoke of a possible reform in which they would return to a style of life more closely eremitical, the kind their holy forefathers on Mount Carmel had embraced. The discalced Franciscans, under the guidance of Fray Peter of Alcántara, provided an example.²⁴ These discalced religious comprised groups who sought to go a step further than the observants and live eremitically in austerity and recollection. They made themselves externally recognizable through their coarse wool habits and their bare feet.

As the half jest turned into an idea worth pursuing Teresa’s first consideration, paradoxically, concerned money. Such a venture would need an assured income, enough to allow the community to live without anxieties. The Council of Trent, as a matter of fact, was at the same time legislating that religious

communities, with the exception of the Franciscans, should have an income, one that would be in proportion to the number of religious. After further information from María de Jesús about the rule of St. Albert and encouragement from Peter of Alcántara, Teresa changed her opinion about money and resolved to found her house in poverty, that is without a fixed income, with trust in God's providence.²⁵ When she changed over to the new discalced mode of life in 1562, Teresa dropped her title and changed her name from Doña Teresa de Ahumada to Teresa of Jesus, the name by which she was known thereafter. Not until this century, it seems, did some outside Spain begin to call her Teresa of Avila.²⁶

When the prior general Rubeo was making his formal visitations in Spain, he visited the new little community of "contemplative" Carmelites, a term he preferred to "discalced," and despite Teresa's fears went away most impressed. He urged his daughter to found more monasteries providing her with all the necessary permissions. Later, he showed his support by going so far as to tell her to make as many foundations as she had hairs on her head (27, 20).

In a letter to her brother Lorenzo, December 21, 1561, Teresa summed up her idea as she initially envisioned it: "To found a monastery where there will be only fifteen nuns and no possibility for any increase in numbers. They will practise a very strict enclosure and thus never go out or be seen without veils covering their faces. Their lives will be founded on prayer and mortification."

In the compact towns and cities of her day, people lived close together, finding their recreation in carefree, informal talk and their sources of news in the busy streets. The enclosure, or cloister, served as the means to which women felt forced to turn if they wanted to escape from the bustle and dedicate their lives to solitude and recollection.

St. Clare's rule contains the classic features of the cloister which were confirmed by Innocent IV (1247) and Urban IV (1264) and decreed by Boniface VIII (1298). Nuns were never to leave the cloister except in cases of serious illness, and outsiders were never to enter the cloister, so that the nuns could "thus be

kept hidden from the gaze of the world and be able to serve God with greater surrender and freedom.”²⁷ Many complained about these norms as being too rigorous, and soon pretexts were invented for abandoning them and establishing private laws to suit the needs of each community.

The practice of enclosure at the Incarnation was not a rigorous one, and Teresa often went outside the monastery. Not until August 21, 1564, when the nuncio Alexander Cribelli exempted her from the observance of the Incarnation was she free to practice enclosure in its rigorous form. In this same period, the Council of Trent dealt with the restoration of the cloister as a tool for reform. But only in 1566 did its decrees become known in Spain. In that same year through the constitution *Circa pastoralis* Pius V imposed rigorous cloister on all religious women including those living in *beaterios* who had never even promised it. When, understandably, requests began pouring into Rome for dispensations from cloister, Pius V resolutely launched, in 1570, the constitution *Decori* reaffirming the previous legislation and abolishing every contrary law or custom, restricting the causes for leaving the enclosure to “a serious fire, leprosy, or an epidemic.” In 1572, the next pope, Gregory XIII, with the constitution *Deo sacris* defined the boundaries of the cloister and ordained that the doors leading into the monastery church should be boarded up, forbidding the nuns to go out to close the outside doors of the church. Teresa doesn’t seem to have become aware of these laws of Gregory XIII, stricter than her own, before 1581. She then began urging their observance.

Teresa’s own enthusiasm for cloister rested on her determination to provide a contemplative environment for her nuns through the authorized means that seemed safest in those times. After all the bothersome complications that marked her many attempts to establish the foundation in Burgos, Teresa writes of the happiness of the nuns when able finally to set up enclosure: “No one but those who experience it will believe the joy that is felt in these foundations once we are enclosed where no secular persons can enter, for however much we love them it is not enough to take away this great consolation in finding ourselves alone” (31, 46). She goes on to point out that the cloister is for her nuns what

water is for fish since these contemplative nuns grow so accustomed to living in the clear-flowing streams of their Spouse.

The architecture of the times manifests a fondness for protective constructions, and sometimes took extravagant forms. From the reign of the Catholic Monarchs the social life of Spain began to stabilize, and people started building houses, palaces, and monuments. Architects foreign and national were in abundant supply. Commercial contracts with foreign countries brought, in their wake, new influences. The flamboyant Flemish Gothic style and the new Italian humanistic style were fused with the Jewish, Islamic, and Christian traditions of medieval Castile. The characteristically Spanish architecture that emerged became known as "plateresque" because of its lavish ornamentation suggesting silver plate. It was a rich and extravagant style requiring rich and extravagant patrons. In her *Way of Perfection* Teresa warns the nuns against extravagance in their buildings.²⁸ In this book of her *Foundations*, she wittily observes that if the building is not elaborately designed the nuns will be spared the necessity of having to go around admiring the walls (14, 5).

From other perspectives, the architecture of the times showed a special bent toward large brick or stone walls, black grilles, strong and simple in shape, and small windows protected by iron bars. The manorial doors were decorated with forged or gilded spikes and with beautifully shaped, pleasant-sounding knockers. Above the lintels were family shields carved in stone.

The classic monasteries reflected these latter traits and sometimes the former extravagant ones as well. The monastery of the Incarnation, like a little fortress, crowned its high walls with a battlement. Granite buttresses, monolithic lintels, and pointed spikes protruding from the doors, all made an impression of might and impregnability. The small windows, too, were guarded by thick iron grates covered with sharp points.

Teresa's monasteries, in humbler style, followed the same form: doors adorned with spikes, small windows protected by heavy bars, and the ritual latticework. The grilles in the parlors were thick and covered with large blunted spikes of iron, an aggressive warning as though some treasure were being defended.

More often than not Teresa's nuns had to learn to make do

with what they could find or afford. Her foundations were sometimes made in neighboring houses joined together, which she adapted into an acceptable monastery. Her nuns today still continue in some of the same houses, living the contemplative life she established in them. If elaborate or expensive architecture elicited a frown from Teresa as far as her ideals were concerned, a beautiful view and a garden with trees and flowers were all-important to her.²⁹ The garden, as well, served as a place for hermitages. In St. Joseph's in Avila as many as ten hermitages were put up in the garden while Teresa was living there.

But if elaborate architecture was frowned on by Teresa, the size of her monasteries had to depend on the number of inhabitants. The monastery in Malagón, endowed by Doña Luisa de la Cerda, is the only building Teresa was able to design according to her own wishes and have constructed completely new; otherwise, adaptation of what already existed was the rule. When the nuns were able to move into this new monastery, in 1579, even though it was still unfinished, they rejoiced along with Teresa because of the ample living space, in contrast with the crowded quarters in which they had been living.³⁰

The use of veils by women to cover their faces is a custom almost as old as humanity. The veiling of women in certain parts of the ancient Near East, for example, is manifested in the Middle-Assyrian law Code, in which a harlot or female slave may not veil her face, but all other women must veil themselves when appearing in public. The custom of women veiling their faces in public was common in Palestine in the first Christian century, but St. Paul found it difficult to enforce in some other places.³¹ Christianity, in fact, inherited the practice from three civilizations, Jewish, Greek, and Roman. Veiling objects or persons consecrated to the divinities was extended to other forms of consecration, such as baptism, marriage, and the consecration of virgins. The custom for women to be veiled gradually fell into disuse in the West but was preserved in the East and among Moslems. Nonetheless, the use of the veil was still current in sixteenth century Spain, especially where there was Moorish influence.

In one of its religious uses the veil became the sign of the consecrated woman. In Teresa's time it caused no surprise or an-

noyance to see nuns with their faces veiled; this was often done by other women as well when they ventured into the streets. There were, in addition, a number of kinds of veils, each with a different meaning. Suarez speaks of some of these: the white veil, a sign of testing that was worn by novices though also by lay Sisters; the veil of full consecration that was received at age twenty-five; the veil for ordination to the stage of deaconess, at age forty, by which one was enabled to read the Gospel and its respective homily during the recitation of the Divine Office; and the veil of recompense that was bestowed on superiors when they reached seventy-five.³²

Along with her esteem for the enclosure as a means toward solitude and of avoiding the lax, distracting atmosphere of other monasteries, Teresa esteemed the veil. Her nuns did not appear in public without having their faces veiled, for wherever they went they attracted the curious. Writing of the foundation in Soria, for example, she shows her feelings on the matter: "We were anxious to get inside because of the large number of people. The world is so fond of novelty that were it not for the veils we wear over our faces, these crowds would be a great trial. But with these veils, we can put up with them" (30, 8).

According to an established custom going back to the Rule of St. Clare, the grilles in the parlors, too, were covered with a veil or curtain. In a new foundation, even before an enclosure was established, Teresa would begin to observe in makeshift fashion the laws about the grille, as in Burgos: "Through a window with a grate covered by a veil, I spoke with those who came to visit me" (31, 20).

In visits with parents and family members, or in similar cases, the veil was seen as unnecessary and not required by Teresa. She herself, when asked, would lift the veil for friends. After Teresa's death, Nicolás Doria made stricter rules about the use of the veil.

As foundress, the Madre discovered that fewer nuns meant greater harmony and quiet. Her ideal remained that of a small group of good friends gathered in the Lord to live totally for Him through a contemplative life of prayer useful for His Church. In her *Way of Perfection*, she outlined the spirituality she en-

visioned for this little group. At the beginning, the number of nuns Teresa had in mind was thirteen, a symbol of Christ and His twelve apostles.³³ When she was obliged to return to the Incarnation as prioress, she felt the contrast between the quiet of her little communities and the commotion among the 130 nuns of the Incarnation.³⁴ In her last years, Madre Teresa increased the limit to twenty in those houses with a fixed income; in those founded in poverty, she set the limit at thirteen or fourteen choir Sisters. With the foundation in Malagón, she began to allow for lay Sisters, but for no more than three. When in the beginning she had set the number at thirteen, she had in mind nuns healthy and young enough to share in the work. As nuns grew older and some became sick, requiring much care and time from others, adaptations had to be made in the numbers.³⁵

In addition to what can be said of the above points summed up in the letter to Don Lorenzo, it must also be stated that the new manner of living Madre Teresa originated for her Carmelite nuns went far beyond a mere reform, or reaction, which would have consisted in the extirpation of abuses and the restoration of regular observance. Inspired by the deepest Gospel spirit, she created, within the framework of Carmelite cenobitical life, a somewhat eremitical mode of living. In addition she illuminated this contemplative mode of life with fresh insight into its meaning and placed emphasis on the apostolic and ecclesial dimensions of prayer, on its relation to all those concerns for the service of Christ that lay so close to her heart. She indeed introduced something new within the Church, the life of prayer as a service.

Austerity in the Reform Movements

Rigorous, at times incredible, types of austerity marked some of the reform movements in the Spain of Teresa's time. In her *Life* she gives a classic description of the harsh penitential practices of St. Peter of Alcántara.³⁶ Now, in this work of her *Foundations*, she devotes more space than she did for the ascetic Franciscan friar to the extraordinary ascetical feats of a woman, Doña Catalina de Cardona (28, 19–37). According to popular notions

of the time, high perfection required rigorous austerity. In a religious world crying for reform, such displays of self-mastery attracted the favor of the people. When they learned of the extreme penances of Doña Catalina in her dark cave near La Roda, the people set out in large numbers to see her. The crowds became so great that she had to be held high so that all could see her and receive her blessing.

Austerity even made its way into the court of Philip II. It was, in fact, the austerity of Teresa's friars that helped win for them the favor of the king. He once defended them to the nuncio Sega pointing out that he found it suspect for the nuncio to be opposing people who profess such rigorous austerity and perfection.

In houses of prayer (of recollection or eremitical life) that arose among Franciscans, Augustinians, Dominicans, and Jeronimites and from which the discalced movements sprang, further steps were taken than in those of the observance to assure that the hours dedicated to what was called mental prayer would be many and the austerities conspicuous. External signs of this austere life were the bare feet and the habits of coarse wool. Teresa's nuns may have gone barefoot at first, but they soon began to wear *alpargatas*, a poor type of sandal made from hemp. Her friars continued going barefoot and only gradually turned to *alpargatas*, first allowing them for the sickly.

The eremitical houses, however, did not look on preaching as a ministry incompatible with eremitism; indeed, they saw it as a part of eremitical living. The theory went that the greater the austerity the more fruitful the preaching.³⁷

In its relationship to prayer and recollection, austerity was looked on as an aid. By quieting the activity of the exterior senses a person enabled a kind of sixth sense to make ready for action. In this sixth sense were grouped the spiritual powers capable of grasping realities lying beyond matter and particularly the reality of God who is pure Spirit. Osuna taught that "closing the corporeal and exterior senses would open the soul's interior ones."³⁸

Sharing in the common esteem for the life of austerity and penance, Teresa wrote enthusiastically about Peter of Alcántara

and Catalina de Cardona. Paradoxically, though, she could not help feeling a certain skepticism about these extremes. While she was once thinking about the life of Catalina de Cardona and feeling regret that her confessors did not allow her to do more, the Lord told her that she was walking on a good and safe path. "Do you see all the penance she does? I value your obedience more."³⁹ In this spirit, when speaking of the penances and disciplines performed by Catalina Sandoval y Godínez, Teresa, in an incidental but revealing way, points out that they were so many because the girl had no one to guide her (22, 11).

In her celebrated visit to her friars in Duruelo to examine first hand the manner of life they had established, Teresa was in general highly impressed. However, there were some doubts that gnawed at her and they concerned the unsparing penitential practices. She begged the friars for moderation fearing that the whole work could be ruined through excess (12, 12). Later, when Gracián was in fact a novice at Pastrana he was strongly tempted to leave because of the extreme practices to which the novices were subjected by a young emotionally disturbed friar who unwisely had been put in charge of them. On this occasion Teresa wrote for advice to her learned Dominican counselor, Domingo Báñez, and subsequently made arrangements for Fray John of the Cross to go to Pastrana and put some moderation into the novitiate life there (23, 9).

The Madre herself was asked by Doña Leonor de Mascareñas and the ecclesiastical superiors to go to the monastery in Alcalá founded by María de Jesús and try to help the nuns there to moderate the austerities that were beginning to cause illnesses in the community. In her *Life*, Teresa refers to María de Jesús as a "woman who practices much penance and prayer." This was the woman who had walked to Rome barefoot in order to obtain the permissions she needed to found the monastery of her desires, and it was she who first informed Teresa about poverty as prescribed in the rule.⁴⁰ But Teresa met with little success in getting the twenty young Sisters to make any changes in their life. Rigidly set in their penitential patterns, they shut out Teresa's gentler ways. María de Jesús continued to go barefoot, winter as well as summer, and to perform her other severe austerities until

the day of her death. When one of these nuns was later asked why the community had never kept any souvenirs of Teresa, she matter-of-factly explained that at the time Teresa came there, they found nothing different about her and that raptures in their community were something common. Finally, the Dominican Báñez, after a couple of months, advised Teresa to go on with her own foundations and not waste her time trying to change them.

The Mother Foundress had observed in her own communities that when physical strength is weakened through austerities a kind of delightful absorption may so overpower a nun that she will allow it to possess her for long hours and even days, not wanting to part with such delight. Teresa carefully demonstrates in this work on her foundations how such absorption differs from rapture which is short-lived and extraordinarily beneficial in its effects. On the other hand, the long periods of time spent in the above mentioned absorptions, she warns, are a waste; if austerities have caused the weakness, they must be reduced (ch. 6).

While pleading with her prioresses to practice discretion in government Madre Teresa begs them not to lay the burden of added austerities on her daughters; no prioress must think that because she is eager and able to embrace new austerities others in the community are also. What is important for Teresa is that the nun does not fail in the more essential matters of the rule, with these a nun has plenty to do (18, 6-11).

If by today's measure the austerities of the lifestyle Teresa established might appear extreme, in her day they were often considered insufficient. In the Madre's view the balanced life of prayer, work, and solitude, arrived at through the nuns' experience, set down and approved in her constitutions, along with the spirituality expounded in *The Way of Perfection*, provided all that was necessary for reaching the goal of the spiritual life. This goal consists in conformity with the will of God and with all that is therein implied; for such conformity, harsh austerities are no more necessary than raptures. It is in the *Foundations* that we find Teresa's often quoted passage regarding perfection: "The highest perfection obviously does not consist in interior delights or in great raptures or in visions or in the spirit of

prophecy but in having our will so much in conformity with God's will that there is nothing we know He wills that we do not want with all our desire, and in accepting the bitter as happily as we do the delightful when we know that His Majesty desires it" (5, 10).

The method the Council of Trent adopted for promoting the reform of religious orders consisted in fostering the observance of the rules and constitutions. As a preventive against laxity, such a method was highly regarded by Teresa; but she also looked on the observance as a preventive against excessive austerities. The adaptability manifested in the virtues of obedience and humility impressed her much more as means of spiritual growth than did harshness. She puts visitators on the alert against allowing prioresses to add further burdens.⁴¹

In her love for obedience and in the examples she provides, the Mother Foundress sometimes gives the impression that in this matter, anyway, she encourages extremes, or even apparent foolishness, somewhat in the style of what one reads in the desert fathers. On the other hand, her enthusiasm for obedience is put in perspective when she issues warnings against indiscretion and offers a practical norm easy to grasp: "Anything that would be a mortal sin when not ordered by the superior would still be one if the superior orders it" (18, 11). She urges her nuns to consult with learned men about how to advance with discretion. In fact, she relates how learned men had to be called in to restrain the nuns and explain to them the matters in which they were obliged to obey (19, 1; 16, 3).

When Teresa met Padre Gracián for the first time, she at once understood that he was the man who could promote this same balance among the friars, "because some think one way, and others another" (23, 12). In his first visitation of the friars, "he arranged everything with such moderation and harmony that it indeed seemed that he was helped by the Divine Majesty and that our Lady had chosen him to help her order" (23, 13).

Desiring that her friars be good contemplatives, Teresa also wanted them to be good spiritual directors and preachers and that there be learned men among them. In the reform movements of eremitism, there was opposition at times toward learn-

ing and university degrees. When Teresa consulted learned men about the founding of St. Joseph's in Avila without a fixed income, Peter of Alcántara chided her in a letter for consulting theologians in matters concerned with spiritual perfection.⁴² Nonetheless, Teresa's unequivocal policy throughout her life was to consult learned men. So often forced by circumstances to make vital decisions about equally alluring courses of action, she felt sore need of light and assistance in her process of discernment. "Never in any business related to these foundations, nor in anything that happened relative to them, did I do anything or would I have done anything . . . that I understood to go contrary to the will of God in even one point, and this too, when I thought that in order to succeed I would have to cover up my intentions" (27, 15). She then shows her practical wisdom: "I proceeded according to what my confessors advised me, for since I have been working on these foundations, they have always been very learned men and great servants of God, as you know" (27, 15). From the Dominicans and the Jesuits came these main advisors.⁴³

In her hopes for learned men among her own friars, Teresa feared that too much stress on austerity would discourage desirable vocations among university students. And in recognition of her ideal, the friars did in a short time set up houses in the university cities of Alcalá and Baeza so that the young members could pursue their studies.⁴⁴

After the death of Teresa, when Nicolás Doria came into power, he expanded the nuns' constitutions and placed severe restrictions on the ministry of the friars. Those seeking to conserve the Mother Foundress's spirit, such as John of the Cross and Gracián, fell into disfavor. Beset with the fear that Madre Teresa's spirit would be snuffed out, Gracián put up resistance and in turn was expelled from the order. Gracián's appeals to the king went unheard because the king looked kindly on Doria's strong convictions about observance and austerity. Among the nuns, María de San José and Ana de Jesús, Teresa's intimates, also underwent punishment within the order (deposition from office, imprisonment, and a kind of exile) for seeking to save what their Mother Foundress had established.⁴⁵

Gracián insists in his own written story of the foundations of the friars that Teresa was foundress of both friars and nuns.⁴⁶ Doria repudiated this claim and was subsequently followed by others who insisted that Antonio de Jesús founded the first monastery of friars and that its first austere spirit was happily restored by Doria. All in all, it was too much for these tough austere men to admit that they had been founded by a woman. The pervasive thinking went that since men are stronger than women they can practice more austerities; thus the nuns could only share in the perfection of the friars.

The World

The term “world” appears frequently enough in Teresa’s writings, but always in a pejorative sense as an irreconcilable enemy of the spiritual person. With this term, then, Teresa refers to only a part of the reality nowadays comprised in the world. Without hesitation she proclaims openly the essential goodness of things and how they show forth the splendor of the Creator. And one of her major themes is the beauty and astounding capacity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God.

When using the expression “world,” Teresa is limiting her reference to that sum of realities that opposes or impedes God’s work. To her eyes the world appears almost as a real person against whom God struggles for dominion over the soul. Like a liar, trying to deceive Christians and separate them from God, the world robs them of peace and inner serenity of soul. Teresa, in her writings, instinctively speaks to the world and chides it for its deceit. She is inclined to measure spirituality in terms of distance from it: “Blessed the young man and blessed the young girl who have merited so much from God that at the age in which people are usually overpowered by the world, they trampled on it” (10, 12).

From honor and money flows the sap that keeps the world alive. In sixteenth-century Castile honor was the very soul of social behavior. Money, also, played such a pivotal role and was

so much tied up with honor that the two realities could be reduced simply to honor.

In the Teresian writings, the word "honor" bears different shades of meaning. Mainly, it speaks of prestige, of all that raises one above another. The important thing was not that persons try to live up to the renown attributed to them or to what dignified them in the sight of others; the important thing was that others say these things and believe them whether they existed in reality or not. With these snobbish concerns the Spaniard became a slave to others, fearful of what they might say.

Since honor was essentially an attribute of nobility, an exceptionally high value was placed on birth and rank. At the top of the ladder came the *grandees*, a group drawn from the oldest families of Castile and Aragon. One of their special distinctions was the privilege of keeping their heads covered in the presence of the king. Immediately below them came other titled aristocrats, the *titulos*, who were the dukes, marquises, and counts. The lesser aristocracy, whose members distinguished themselves with the title "Don" were called either *caballeros* (knights or gentlemen) or *hidalgos*. Their status gave them exemption from taxation. Among these aristocrats, some were rich and others extremely poor; some came from ancient families, while others were recently ennobled bourgeois.

The social and practical advantages attached to the possession of *hidalguia* made it an object of universal desire; heraldry, emblazoned everywhere, became the indispensable key to all the subtleties of status. Vast amounts of time and effort went into the construction, or fabrication, of genealogical tables that would prove the existence of aristocratic ancestors. Despite the emphasis on ancestry, though, from 1520 on privileges of *hidalguia* were put up for sale as a means of enhancing a dwindling royal treasury. Wealth then enabled rich mercantile families to ally themselves with families of respectable aristocratic lineage.

With so much value placed on birth and rank, the ordinary members of society sought compensation, and they found it in the doctrine of *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood). They reasoned that it was preferable to be born of humble but pure Christian parentage than to be a *caballero* of "suspicious" background,

Moorish or Jewish. Pure ancestry provided for those in the lower ranks of society what noble ancestry did for those in the higher ranks. Honor was achieved by proving the purity of one's ancestry.

In worldliness, Teresa beheld the eager quest for prestige and possessions. "What friendship there would be among all if there were no self-interest about honor and money! I think this absence of self-interest would solve all problems."⁴⁷ The quest for prestige and money puts one in opposition to God's work. Inherent in such a quest lies a deceptive centering on earth, on passing joys, on the superficial and limited, on that which comes to an end. These things offer nothing in exchange for the sublime gifts of God's friendship. But the fundamental problem of the world, understood in this sense, is ignorance of revelation, of the word of God. "All the harm that comes to the world comes from its not knowing the truths of Scripture in clarity and truth."⁴⁸

All-important to noble families was an heir to their properties. Chapter 10 in these *Foundations* gives a striking example of the situation. If some daughters were forced to enter convents for the sake of avoiding family disgrace, others for the sake of preserving or adding to family prestige were prevented from entering. The son and the daughters of Doña María de Acuña, sister of the count of Buendía and widow of the governor of Castile, met with strong opposition in the family when they decided to renounce their inheritance and enter religious life. The lively story of the twelve-year-old Doña Casilda de Padilla's escape from a family-arranged marriage into the cloister leaves a reader nowadays half amazed and half amused. Teresa shares with us her resulting reflections from the incident. "It is a great pity the world is now so unfortunate and blind that it seems to parents their honor lies in not letting the dung of this world's goods be forgotten and in not remembering that sooner or later these things will come to an end." Then, enlarging on the matter, she goes on to lament, "Such parents want to sustain their own vanities at a cost to their children, and very boldly take from God souls that He wants for Himself" (10, 9).⁴⁹

Another mark of honor or prestige, which became an enviable

means to social acceptance, was a chapel for burial. In Toledo, in one instance, Teresa found herself in a sticky tangle when members of the nobility asked for the chapel after she had already promised it to the Ramírez family, who were merchants and probably *conversos*, converted Jews. It is in the context of dealing with this issue that she makes her classic statement: "I have always esteemed virtue more than lineage" (15, 15). Teresa, in fact, received so many opinions from everybody about what to do that she did not know how to proceed and began to waver. The Lord Himself intervened and gave the light she needed in a manner that He often used in enlightening her. By means of a locution He insisted that lineage and social status mattered not at all in the judgments of God. He severely reprimanded Teresa telling her that "concerns of this sort were not for those who had already despised the world" (15, 16).

As for the Mother Foundress's own dealings with money, she first thought, as mentioned, of founding her monasteries with a fixed income that would derive from interest on investments made by the founding benefactor in state, municipal, or private enterprises. The nuns, then, would be free of worries about their basic needs. Madre Teresa's personal love of poverty is obvious from the *Life* in which she says "for a long time I had been desiring that it would be possible for me to go begging for love of God and not have a house or anything." But such lofty ideals could not be imposed on others: "I feared that if the Lord didn't give others these desires their lives would be unhappy."⁵⁰ In the end, Teresa opted for a mode of action contrary to what learned men had advised her and followed instead, with the encouragement of St. Peter of Alcántara, the growing urge coming from within to found her monastery in poverty, without a fixed and secure income. With entire dependence on God, she placed her first house under His providence. As things turned out, her companions also came to know the special joy that can accompany poverty. The harsh experience of poverty they underwent in rich Toledo was a communal one and became "the cause of a sweet contemplation" (15, 14). From that time Teresa's desires to be poor increased. "And I felt freedom in having so little esteem for temporal goods, for lack of these goods brings an increase

of interior good. Certainly, such a lack carries in its wake another kind of fullness and tranquility" (15, 15).

Madre Teresa's ideals about poverty, in fact, caused her much more difficulty in obtaining permission to make foundations. In addition, as her desires for poverty increased, her need to deal with money also seems to have increased. She wrote to her brother Lorenzo: "So now that I have come to abhor money and business matters, the Lord wills that I deal with nothing else, which is no small cross."⁵¹

A problem for Teresa's ideal of poverty, however, lurked in the small towns. In them, it was simply impossible to survive without a fixed income. The Madre first resisted Doña Luisa de la Cerda's request for a monastery in the little town of Malagón. Determined to get her way, Doña Luisa found some allies among the theologians and especially in one of Teresa's confessors, Domingo Báñez. Concerning her resistance to a foundation in Alba de Tormes with a fixed income, Teresa was again challenged by Báñez. As a matter of fact, he actually scolded Teresa, as she explains: "He reprimanded me and told me that since the Council had given permission it would not be right to forego the foundation because of a need for an income" (20, 1). Báñez went on arguing that whether or not a monastery had an income made little difference with regard to the holiness of the nuns. In succumbing to the Dominican's arguments, Teresa did so only under the condition that those foundations made with a fixed income be an exception justified by the economic situation of the place where the monastery was to be located. She could never bring herself to the idea of founding monasteries with a fixed income in cities where there was wealth.

When she was called upon to found in small towns, that is, with an income, she was carefully exacting about the endowment so that no economic problems for the nuns would surface in the future. For example, with respect to the foundation in Alba de Tormes, she writes: "We underwent much difficulty in trying to come to an agreement. For in the case of monasteries founded with an income, my goal always was that they have enough to keep the nuns from dependence on relatives, or on anyone, and that food and clothing and everything necessary be

given to them in the house, and that the sick be very well cared for" (20, 13). Happy to trust in God, she never worried about those monasteries founded in poverty, but the ones that were dependent on a fixed income for support presented her with a different picture. She figured that if the established income were too small, the monastery would be doomed. In the end, seven of the monasteries were founded with an income: Malagón, Pastrana, Alba de Tormes, Beas, Caravaca, Villanueva de la Jara, and Soria.

To live off investments was the dream of every powerful Castilian of Teresa's day. Money in land, in urban real estate, or in the most active elements of the royal estate proved to be the safest investment. Work was not respected as a source of wealth. It was counter to the current of the times and contrary to the practice in other monasteries, then, that the Mother Foundress wanted her communities to survive with the help of income gained through work, in addition to that coming from donations.

The kind of work recommended by Madre Teresa was the peaceful, uncomplicated labor of spinning, without the pressure of deadlines. But women's work, especially, was poorly paid, and a perusal of account books shows that the income derived from the nuns' work amounted to little when compared to the donations. The latter became the real means of support for the communities. In any case, though the usual donations and the income from labor took care of the nuns' daily needs, additional income was needed to cover the cost of other eventualities such as improvements on a house, erecting new ones, or paying off debts. In these latter instances, generous benefactors usually came forward.

In her *Foundations*, Teresa makes a point of mentioning benefactors by name so that "the nuns living now, and those who are to come after, remember them in their prayers" (31, 29). It was her experience that the Lord always provided for them in their needs by awakening some to come to their aid. "When it is known that a monastery is founded in poverty, there is nothing to fear because everyone helps. But when people think it has an income, to be without one is dangerous and the monastery will be left temporarily without means" (31, 48).

Dowries made up another important contribution to the community's financial needs. According to the practice of the times, a woman entering religious life was required to bring a dowry. The inequality of status in Teresa's former monastery, the Incarnation, was rooted in the difference in dowries. As a consequence, Teresa shows a certain scorn of dowries. She exhorts her nuns never to refuse to accept any applicants because of their lack of money for a dowry. "On the contrary," she says, "I had fear about those with wealth, but the poor filled and enlarged my spirit with a happiness so great I wept for joy" (27, 13).

Though the contribution of a dowry was encouraged, Teresa's trust in the Lord allowed for much flexibility. After her death, in the chapter of Valladolid, 1587, the friars established a fixed rate of five hundred ducats for the dowry. María de San José lamented the law, saying it was foreign to her Holy Mother's spirit.

During the dramatic years of her activity, Madre Teresa faced countless legal actions and financial worries. Never slackening in her efforts, she offered advice on scores of proceedings and profitable investments, averting hardships here, encouraging intercommunity assistance there. She was forced to immerse herself in oceans of red tape, study intricately complex contracts, whose clauses had to be read and reread in every detail. Buying a house required shrewdness. We get a picture of the latter when the Madre was looking for houses to buy in Palencia. "Finally, I went to see them and also those of Our Lady of the Street, although not with the intention of buying these latter but only so that the owner of the others would not think that we had no other choice" (29, 15).

Holiness did not prohibit the Mother Foundress from rejoicing over a bargain. In a letter to Ambrosio Mariano, she shares her joy that the house they bought in Seville for six thousand ducats was worth more than twenty thousand.⁵² In writing of the trouble-ridden Burgos foundation, she praises the diligence and intelligence of her good friend Doctor Aguiar who by insisting on secrecy was able to buy a house at a price that in the minds of many "was no less than a miracle" (31, 39). In their experience of poverty in Toledo at the outset, the nuns had only three or

four ducats to their name. Teresa shows her pleasure when with the help of Alonso Alvarez they were able to buy an attractive house, "one of the nicest in Toledo," for twelve thousand ducats (15, 6, 17).

The community account books in Medina del Campo offer an idea of income and expenditures. The income for the month of August in 1571 was 5,171 maravedis, the disbursements amounted to 17,003 maravedis. In September the income was 12,780 maravedis and the disbursements amounted to 10,719 maravedis. The surplus for the month of September came from an extraordinary donation by the merchant Juan de Medina who surprised the community with the sum of twenty ducats. The expenditures went mainly for food: bread, eggs, oil, fruit, fish, rice, and greens. An extraordinary expense could unbalance the budget. These would include things like the cost of a trip for superiors, the Mother Foundress's own journeys, sending messengers, repairs on the roof or on the wall.

As for the value of the ducat and maravedi, the two sums of money most often mentioned by Teresa, they might best be measured by what could be purchased with them. The ducat was the most common gold coin and was worth 375 maravedis. Using the year 1560 as a point of reference, a liter of oil cost 43 maravedis, a dozen of eggs 35 maravedis, and a kilo of bread about 6 maravedis. In all these matters with regard to money Teresa's persistent conviction was that God will never "fail those who serve Him, if they live as moderately as we do," in communities where "the nuns are so few and help themselves through the labor of their hands" (18, 1).⁵³ An astounding testimony to the validity of her conviction is the fact that all of her seventeen foundations are still in existence today, four centuries later; some of the communities are living in the same houses in which the foundations were made.

On Making a Foundation

In making a foundation, Teresa developed her own method of procedure in which she adapted to circumstances. In founda-

tions made in poverty, before starting off on the journey, she endeavored to rent a house that would serve as a temporary dwelling until a house, or houses, suitable for a monastery could be bought. In foundations made with an income, the nuns first lived in the quarters of the founding benefactress until adaptations in the house destined to be the monastery were made.

Teresa arrived at this method through painful experience, as in Valladolid where the first property turned out to be unhealthy and too far from the city. There was another important factor that obliged her to begin by renting. Teresa puts it bluntly: "I didn't have a cent to buy one with" (21, 2). In her boundless trust, she believed that once they were established in a rented house, the Lord would provide. Her subsequent experiences gave support to her belief: "For the Lord Himself, as seen in the other foundations, chooses in each place someone to help Him" (29, 8).

After the embarrassing muddle in Medina del Campo, her first foundation away from Avila, she concluded that it was best to take with her at the start as few nuns as possible. The Mother Foundress and her few nuns would then be accompanied by a chaplain and other helpers, such as Padre Julián de Avila and Antonio Gaytán. They also brought along some basic furnishings; straw, for example, "which was the first thing I provided for the founding of the house, because in having straw we would have a bed" (19, 4).

Moreover, she arranged the daily journeys so that the little group would reach its destination in the secret of night. These nighttime entries proved most advantageous. Mainly, they enabled Teresa and her companions to prepare a room, a place that she often euphemistically refers to as a church, where Mass could be said immediately the following morning so as to make the foundation official. By thus making the foundation secretly and by surprising the townspeople with a *fait accompli*, she was able to preclude opposition, especially the usual opposition from other begrudging religious orders.

Often, then, the nuns spent the first night working hurriedly instead of giving themselves some much needed rest after their tiring travels. Throughout the story of the foundations, it is

obvious that Teresa entered wholeheartedly into this and other work and seems to have relished it. "When there was question of work to be done I enjoyed being the first" (19, 6). Some of her humorous accounts in this respect have become classic.

Once the foundation was established in this precarious way, the Mother Foundress had to enter the arena of house searching. Sometimes she met with no trouble, as when in Valladolid she had the help of a friend and benefactress as influential as María de Mendoza, the widow of the brilliant and skillful Francisco de los Cobos, under whose gentle guidance the government of Spain had run smoothly for some twenty years in the absence of Charles V. At other times, wealthy people, or friends, were no help; in Toledo the poor student Andrada found in a short while what Teresa's wealthy friends could not. The search for a house in Salamanca lasted three years. When it finally seemed that all had been arranged, the owner turned up so enraged that at the time of Teresa's writing on the matter the sale of the house had not yet been finalized, so many were the complications he created.

Opposition to Madre Teresa's buying a house sometimes came in the form of lawsuits. In Segovia the nuns were beset with lawsuits from the Franciscans, the Mercedarians, and the cathedral chapter. The cathedral chapter feared losing out on an annuity, and the religious orders feared competition for the charity of the people of Segovia. The only means the nuns found of extricating themselves in this latter instance was money. "Explained in this way," Teresa remarks, "it all seems like nothing; but going through it was something else" (21, 8-10).

In Seville, the Franciscan friars so contested Teresa's buying a house near them that when the nuns moved in they did so fearfully at night, and "every shadow they saw seemed to be a friar." In Teresa's reflections she moves from her own experience of human weakness to relief in the thought that her fears came in the cause of good. "O Jesus! How many fears I have suffered before taking possession of these foundations! I reflect on the fact that if one can feel so much fear in doing something good for the service of God, what must be the fear of those who do evil" (25, 7-8). Also, as a kind of compensation for the opposition of other

religious orders, the Madre makes a point of mentioning the ever present assistance of the Dominicans and the Jesuits.

Sometimes, the owner raised the price when he saw that the Mother Foundress was interested. In Palencia the proprietor asked a high price when quite sure that the nuns would buy; when he was certain, he raised it another three hundred ducats. But his little trick backfired, for it enabled Teresa to decide on another house that had captured her interest and which the Lord, through a locution, requested her to buy.

It ought to be mentioned, parenthetically, that in many practical matters Teresa experienced extraordinary help from the Lord through locutions. She continued to receive them up to the end of her life. Her custom with regard to them, though, was to consult a confessor about the locution, always determined to follow his advice even if it went contrary to the locution (29, 21; 31, 4).⁵⁴ A powerful example of this determination is the instance in which though our Lord told her to make a foundation in Madrid, she went to Seville instead at Gracián's orders. She believed she had more certitude of doing God's will by obeying her superior than by obeying her locution.⁵⁵

Returning to the matter of buying a house, in Burgos an outcry arose not because Teresa got a house but because she got one at such a low price. This she was able to do through the astute dealings of her friend Doctor Aguiar, after which the people disgustedly moaned that the priest appointed to sell the house had practically given it away.

Troubles worsened when the opposition came from diocesan administrators. In two cases, archbishops opposed her. In Seville, the archbishop, after having promised much, refused just as much once the nuns had arrived. Teresa came close to returning to Castile without making the foundation. Only after the archbishop's personal visit with Teresa did he begin to support the nuns. More painful and disturbing was the conduct of the archbishop of Burgos. Strangely and inexplicably, he would think of a new requirement as soon as a previous one was met. "The archbishop always said that he desired this foundation more than anyone. And I believe it because he is such a good Christian that he wouldn't speak anything but the truth; but in

his deeds it didn't appear that he desired this since he demanded things that seemed impossible for us to comply with" (30, 31).

In measuring the difficulties she experienced in each foundation, the Mother Foundress concludes that St. Joseph's in Avila was the hardest, followed by Seville (26, 2). Had she made the assessment again after her last in Burgos, she would surely have included it in the category of the most difficult. Nonetheless, every one of her foundations, with the exception of Soria, which got off on the right foot from the first moment, amounted to a physical, psychological, and spiritual trial for the foundress. "The Lord desired that no foundation be made without some trial in one way or another" (24, 15).

In a time when churches were being destroyed and the Blessed Sacrament taken away, a strong motivation for Teresa was the consolation she felt in seeing another church where the Blessed Sacrament could be reserved. "For although we often do not take note, it ought to be a great consolation for us that Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is present in the most Blessed Sacrament in many places" (18, 5).⁵⁶ In Madre Teresa's mind the people in a town were actually receiving a precious favor from God when one of her foundations was made. The thought that there might be too many monasteries never bothered her. She firmly held that where there are many monasteries God brings about great blessings and that he has the power to sustain many as well as few (29, 27; 31, 13).

In her best-informed attempts, however, she had many conflicting opinions to weigh. "O Jesus!" she complains, "what a trial it is to have to contend with many opinions." As for negative advice, "where there is need one takes poorly any advice that doesn't provide some help" (21, 9; 19, 8). When immersed in controversy and doubt, her one desire was always to do the will of God. She declares that in all the business matters and everything else related to her foundations she never did or would have done anything contrary to the will of God, which did not remove the necessity of frequently choosing secrecy as the best mode of procedure. "If we begin discussing opinions, the devil disturbs everything." But in her mind there is never any ques-

tion of having no faults. "Perhaps I am mistaken and have done many things wrong without realizing it; and the imperfections are countless" (27, 15; 19, 8). In telling her story, she tempers her account of those who opposed her and tries to excuse them. As for those who shared as benefactors and helpers in her work for the Lord, she is untiring in expressing her gratitude to them.

If taking possession of a foundation had to be done secretly, the time came later for the public inauguration, an act usually surrounded by festive solemnity. It was the moment for reserving the Blessed Sacrament in a definitive way and for rejoicing in God's triumph over the devil; it was a moment of victory for the nuns, definitely able now to live in solitude with God.

The Mother Foundress never cared to leave a new foundation until the major obstacles were surmounted, the nuns' basic needs were provided for, and everything was in order. She resisted pressures from the princess of Eboli who insisted that she come to Pastrana when things were not yet completely settled in Toledo. In reference to a superior's order that she leave Salamanca to become prioress at the Incarnation, she writes: "I never would, or did, leave any monastery until it was in fit condition, had a spirit of recollection, and was adapted according to my wishes" (19, 6).

To her new foundations, Teresa of Jesus never failed to carry images of Christ and His saints. These sacred images fell in line with her own devotion and were for her a magnificent means of awakening love. One of her joys in life was to adorn her churches and hermitages with statues and paintings of gospel scenes. In Toledo with only three or four ducats to her name, she bought two straw mattresses and a woolen blanket; the rest of the money was spent on two paintings of Christ in His sufferings (15, 6). These paintings have been preserved to this day at the nuns' monastery in Toledo. Similarly, in the other foundations she made, there still exist various statues or paintings that Teresa brought with her or venerated devoutly; in some instances she hired artists to paint scenes on certain subjects. The well known *Cristo de los Lindos Ojos*, in a hermitage at St. Joseph's in Avila, was painted in accord with a vision of Christ that Teresa had received. For the Mother Foundress these images were like portraits of the persons she loved.

Teresa's mysticism was never snobbish. Even after her rich spiritual life had grown to full flower and she was experiencing profound enlightenment from within, she esteemed these simple means to love. In fact, her mystical life, we might say, bestowed on these means a new power, and in turn she received more from them. The mystic understands experientially the divine realities and will often sense a stronger need to give outward expression to this understanding.

Travel

The Carmelite chapter held in Piacenza, Italy, in 1575 attempted to confine the expansion of its discalced friars in Spain and maintain control. At the same time, it made a decision that was not to be published but communicated to Madre Teresa by her provincial, Angel de Salazar. For reasons that will be explained later, Teresa was ordered by the chapter to stay in one Castilian monastery and not leave it. She interpreted the command as a form of imprisonment, a conclusion she came to because "there is no nun who for necessary matters pertaining to the good of the order cannot be ordered by the provincial to go from one place to another" (27, 20). The irony of the situation, not so unusual, was that Teresa now received blame for doing what she had been asked to do.

However, in addition to the troubles springing up within the order on account of the Madre's friars, the thinking in the Church after the Council of Trent had changed. Pius V in his interpretation of the directives of the Council had imposed strict cloister on all nuns. The nuncio Ormaneto, although very friendly toward Teresa, began to get qualms about the Mother Foundress's travels throughout Spain. In letters to Gracián, he confided that he was not wholly pleased with her exits from the monastery and requested some kind of gentle solution that would not sadden "this good and holy Mother."

He misjudged "this good and holy Mother." She was not saddened by the order given her from the chapter in Piacenza not to leave her monastery; she was overjoyed. It was precisely what she had been longing for: to end her days in quiet.

Travel for Teresa, with her bad health, had often been a veritable torment. In those days, even with good health, there was nothing very pleasurable about traveling. In her story, she ordinarily avoids detailed descriptions of the hardships involved in her journeys, but undoubtedly the Mother Foundress felt aversion toward them. In a passing remark she explains: "I am not recording in these foundations the great hardships endured in the traveling: the cold, the heat, the snow . . . ; sometimes getting lost, at other times, being very sick and having a fever" (18, 4; 27, 17). Pointing out that she could have mentioned many bad incidents that occurred on the journeys, Teresa does go into some specifics when writing of the trip to Seville. Here the reader learns both what the travelers suffered from the scorching heat and what Teresa in addition endured from her sorry health. As for the latter, she laments: "What a thing sickness is! When we're healthy, it's easy to put up with all kinds of inconveniences" (24, 8). In this journey, too, the celebrated crossing of the Guadalquivir took place. In recounting the trip to Burgos, she again describes more about the traveling conditions. This time, in addition to her fever and a throat so sore that she couldn't eat, the travelers were chilled to the bone by the cold and the heavy rains. The wagons were forever getting stuck in the mud, and at one point all came near to being killed when crossing a flooded bridge.

A number of times on their journeys, they all got lost. Once, the guides, not really knowing the way, misguided Teresa's little group along routes not made for wagons causing the wagons to tip over. Finally, when the guides had got so completely lost that they did not know where to turn next, they excused themselves saying that they had other things to do now and that it was time for them to leave. The danger of getting lost increased, of course, after dark. The nuns' frequent chaplain for these journeys, Julián de Avila, tells in his biography of Teresa how once on a trip to Salamanca the mule carrying the money got lost after dark.⁵⁷ One time, Teresa herself got lost from the group.

"And, oh! The inns!", Teresa exclaims. They could be totally without comfort, overcrowded, dirty, and swarming with vermin. The clientele were often rowdy, perverse, and foul-mouthed; sometimes the friars and nuns were made sport of. Nor could

anyone ever be certain that an inn would have food to provide for hungry travelers. On the way to Seville, Teresa and her companions stopped at the inn of Albino hoping to soothe their intense thirst and satisfy their hunger, only to find that the inn was out of water and that the sole remaining food was some salty sardines. In a later letter, Teresa writes from Seville: "It's hot, but that's easier to endure than the inn at Albino." Once, in trying to think of something terrible to compare hell to, she opts for a bad inn.⁵⁸

The means of travel used by Teresa and her companions included, with the exception of the litter, all those used in Spain at the time: donkey, mule, horse, covered wagon, coach and carriage. The one preferred and usually used by her was the covered wagon; it kept the nuns hidden from the curiosity of the people. When necessary, she made no fuss and used the coach, a more fashionable and luxurious form of travel favored by the wealthy. It could be drawn by either horses or mules. This was a means offered to Teresa when the business matter or foundation bore some relation to the aristocracy. The coaches she had use of at various times included, for example, those belonging to the Mendozas, the family of the bishop of Avila, to Doña Luisa de la Cerda, founding benefactress of Malagón, to the princess of Eboli, for the foundation in Pastrana, and to the people of Villanueva de la Jara, who sent a coach to bring the Mother Foundress from Malagón. By far the best journey of all turned out to be the one to Soria for which Teresa had three coaches at her disposal, provided by Doña Beatriz de Beamonte and the bishops of Osma and Palencia. Although the coach could be ideal for short journeys on level and dry terrain, on a winter journey in snow and heavy rain, it could become an added burden. Such was the case in the miserable trip to Burgos in the month of January. For the last, and especially unpleasant, journey of her life, to Alba de Tormes, while she was already suffering from her final illness, Teresa was given the most luxurious vehicle she had known, the carriage of the duchess of Alba; but her health had gone beyond the state in which anything like that could be enjoyed.

Madre Teresa also learned what it was to travel by donkey in

the middle of December, which she had to do so as to carry out some orders from a superior. A few other times she also traveled by donkey. But, ordinarily, when not journeying by wagon or coach, she rode the mule and was exposed to the heat of the sun or the cold winds of winter. Her visit to Duruelo in the midst of August was made by mule. Gracián, in fact, has left word of Madre Teresa's skill in handling a mule. What he did not leave on record but which we know from other sources is that he himself was not unused to being thrown from his mule. Teresa once jokingly suggested that they tie him to the saddle.

A pervading spirit marked all of Teresa's journeys: she was traveling for an ideal. Creating her own style of travel, she moved through Spain making foundations. What she in reality did was transfer the community life of Carmel into the covered wagon, joining to this life inside the wagon a system of good relationships with the group of helping companions outside of it. Inside, the group had their prioress, their schedule of prayer, a water clock, a tiny bell, their breviaries, holy water, a crucifix and some statues of our Lady, St. Joseph, or the Infant Jesus. Outside, the small group included the wagon drivers and perhaps a nobleman or a merchant or some other friend ready to lend a helping hand when needed; finally, there was the chaplain who would celebrate Mass in whatever little church they might happen upon along the way.

Inside, the Sisters had their times for laughing and joking—they were joyful solitaires—and writing and singing verses so as to help pass the long days; they also recited the Hours of the breviary and observed periods of silence. Outside, the men had to be sure they were taking the right roads, keep the mules in line, sometimes hire a barge to cross a river, or settle for damages, or retrace a road taken by mistake. The clergy and friars among them tried to maintain peace.

The muleteers were usually charmed and inspired by the Mother Foundress who was so solicitous for everyone's needs. But now and again they reverted to their old selves and resisted her pious reflections. Once after a full-day's journey in heavy rains, with no protection and unable to find a place of lodging after miles and miles of journey, the group reached an inn at

nightfall only to find that there was nothing for lighting the lamps and no food. In addition, the roof was so full of leaks that the water came in everywhere even on top of the beds. Teresa, in an attempt to lift everyone's spirits, exclaimed: "Come now, take heart, these are days very meritorious for gaining heaven." The mule driver, soaked to the skin and unimpressed, responded: "I could have also gained heaven by staying home."

On approaching an inn, Madre Teresa would send someone ahead to order food and to reserve rooms. One of the rooms had to be sufficiently large to permit the nuns to stay together, and all their needs were to be placed there. On leaving the wagon, the nuns lowered their veils; once in their room, they closed the door, and a portress was appointed. In those inns where the nuns were unable to have a room for themselves, blankets were brought in and hung up so as to allow them their privacy.⁵⁹

Illnesses

From her youth until the moment of her death, Teresa was assailed by bodily illnesses; sickness was one of the great battles of her life. Keenly observant, she has written of these illnesses with impressive objectivity, precise description, and great simplicity. When in her early twenties, already a professed nun in the monastery of the Incarnation, Doña Teresa de Ahumada began to suffer from a febrile illness, which was later seriously aggravated by some dubious methods of cure used by a quack in Becedas. Convulsions and a coma of four-days' duration followed; only slowly did she afterward recover. A critical analysis of the illness from Teresa's description and the testimony of eyewitnesses makes it possible to conclude now that the most probable cause was brucellosis, with complications of meningoencephalitis and neuritis.⁶⁰ This illness can come to an end spontaneously without leaving any serious neurological problems; nonetheless, Teresa's physical well-being was affected negatively. Her bad health, though, never interfered substantially with her capacity for intellectual and organizational work or for full spiritual growth.

Undoubtedly, the countless trials and consequent stress that

Teresa had to endure in her mystical life and her life of service as foundress must have taken their toll and contributed to her illnesses. Her own awareness of this possibility seems clear enough in some words of comfort she wrote to María de San José who was at the time in the midst of certain unpleasant troubles in Seville: "I was sorry to hear of the heart trouble you have, which is very painful. But I'm not surprised, for your trials have been terrible and you are very much alone. Though the Lord has granted us the favor of giving you the virtue and courage to bear these trials, you cannot help feeling their physical effects."⁶¹

A further difficulty in the Mother Foundress's case, exacerbating an already delicate condition, was the penchant to take lightly any need for rest and care. It is somewhat surprising to us that the doctor had to tell her that her head would be in a better condition if she did not stay up until two in the morning writing letters and also warn her never to write after midnight.⁶²

If her trials could affect her physical state, her bodily illnesses, by the same token, could affect her psyche. She confesses: "Often I complain to our Lord about how much the poor soul shares in the illness of the body. It seems the soul can do nothing but abide by the laws of the body and all its needs and changes" (29, 2).

To add to her infirmities, on Christmas eve in 1577, Teresa fell down the stairs at St. Joseph's in Avila and broke her arm. Since it did not set properly, a well known but unlicensed practitioner from Medina del Campo performed an osteoclasis. In thus breaking her bone again so as to correct the deformity, a most painful procedure, he not only failed to remedy the matter but made things worse. Teresa's arm was left maimed and useless; for the rest of her life she needed help, even for simple tasks such as dressing and undressing.

If Madre Teresa shied away from caring for herself, her own experience of bodily infirmities and spiritual trials heightened her capacity to feel compassion for other suffering people. In a letter to Gracián, speaking of how a soul can have no better sustenance than trials, she also makes it clear that this conviction does not remove the pain of seeing others suffer. "I mean there must be a whole world of difference between suffering oneself and seeing one's neighbor suffer."⁶³ Thus, she orders that the

sick, especially, should be cared for with fullness of love, concern for their comfort, and compassion. Healthy nuns should be ready to deprive themselves rather than allow the sick to go without some deeds of kindness.

One wonders at times how much awareness of mental and bodily hygiene was present in the ascetical practices of sixteenth-century spirituality. With regard to her nuns, Teresa does show a decided concern for monastic hygiene. She wants her foundations to be made in healthy surroundings, requires good health in those entering her communities, and values it in the prioress, or at least in the subprioress if the prioress is sickly. She recommends more than six hours of sleep for her nuns. Insisting on cleanliness, she demands it particularly in the care of the sick.⁶⁴

Teresa's writings abound with comments on a variety of illnesses: tertian and quartan fevers, heart ailments, tuberculosis, vomitings of blood, headaches, lightheadedness, stomach-aches, breast cancer, chills, colds, the plague, inflammation of the liver, gout, sciatica, typhus, tumors, side-aches, shoulder-aches, palsy, stone, rheumatism, toothaches, skin rashes, and more. She agilely and correctly employs the contemporary medical terminology.

She also demonstrates a good familiarity with the therapeutics of her day. The different remedies about which she speaks and gives advice have their basis in the sixteenth-century pharmacopoeia: orange-flower water, sarsaparilla, nuts, coriander, rhubarb, dog rose, lavender, and so on. In a doctor's written account from those times we get a glimpse of the use of these remedies: "Coriander is good but not too good. Rhubarb is used as a eupeptic, purgative, and against worms. Dog rose because of its richness in tannic acid is employed as an astringent and against diarrhea; lavender is applied in cases of rheumatism and on bruises, taken in tincture as a stimulant, and used as a disinfectant in fumigating." If what she wrote in letters and elsewhere about the symptoms, remedies, and treatment for illnesses presupposes close observation and well informed capabilities, Teresa never tried to practice medicine on her own account but always showed a respect for the science of medicine and for doctors. She would often point out that a doctor prescribed a particular remedy for her or give the advice to talk a matter over with the doctor. She

was careful, as well, to distinguish between light ailments and something serious. Fever gave the warning sign for concern.⁶⁵

In her detailed account of the incredible illnesses of Doña Catalina de Sandoval y Godínez, Teresa manifests the importance she places on getting the facts straight. Despite all her own experiences with illness, she was so astounded by the many things told to her of Doña Catalina's bodily sufferings that she inquired herself of the doctor so as to check the facts. In speaking of these illnesses of Doña Catalina, Teresa lists as well some of the healing methods of the times: bloodletting, cupping, cauterization, and pouring salt on wounds. Some of these remedies were extremely painful (22, 14–19).

As for mental and emotional illnesses, the Mother Foundress uses the term "melancholy" for the whole gamut of them. Chapter seven of the *Foundations* amounts to a little treatise on melancholy. The reader is amazed at the sharpness of its observations and the extent of its understanding of the human psyche; this from one who had not even the most elemental training or reading knowledge from books on medicine. Attributed to one of the four bodily humors, melancholy (black bile in excess) was in those times considered the cause of mental and emotional dysfunction. Teresa's little treatise on melancholy is a kind of precursor of later Spanish works on the subject. Even Andrés Velázquez's *Libro de la Melancolia*, published in Seville in 1585, comes after Teresa's death.

In this chapter Madre Teresa warns prioresses that however much they may strive to exclude from their communities any applicants who suffer from melancholy, "it is subtle and feigns death when it needs to, and thus we do not recognize it until the matter cannot be remedied" (7, 1). In admitting that one person afflicted with melancholy can be enough to disrupt the quiet of an entire community, she alerts prioresses to the contrivances that this humor uses to get its own way. One must search out and understand these contrivances in order to govern the afflicted in such a way that no harm is done to the other nuns.

The remedy Teresa proposes for those seriously afflicted still has its validity: the condition should be cared for as a major illness; the sick nun should be isolated; she should be treated with

much love, but made to understand that she cannot return to the community as long as she thinks she will be free to do whatever she wants; on allowing her to return, an all-important remedy will be to keep her occupied with duties so that she will not have the opportunity to be imagining things; sometimes the humor can be reduced by means of medicine. Teresa's suggestion that such a nun not eat fish shows an awareness of the importance of diet. At the time, people probably thought that fish was less nourishing than meat.

The Inquisition

The intermingling of Christians, Jews, and Moors in Spain created complex religious and racial problems and prompted the organization of a tribunal whose solution was the imposition of Christian orthodoxy. In a land where heterodox views existed in large number and where new heresies to the north might easily enter and take root, the Spanish Inquisition would not brook even the slightest diversion from the most rigid orthodoxy. Any small deviation, it was feared, would open the way to outright heresies. To be investigated by the Inquisition was a serious and dangerous business, to say nothing of all the gossip and loss of one's honor it would occasion. In her *Life*, Teresa laughed to herself over these anxieties about being accused to the Inquisition and declared that if she had something to fear with regard to her faith, she would go herself to seek out the Inquisitors.⁶⁶ The opportunity for her to demonstrate such fearlessness came when she resided in Seville, where she was accused to the Inquisition (27, 20).

Shortly after the foundation in Seville was made, the first novices entered. Among them was a forty-year-old widowed beata with a reputation for sanctity and already canonized by the people. Her name was María del Corro. However, her age and her own brand of spirituality made adaptation to the Teresian Carmelite life a demanding chore, and she had to seek dispensation from one thing after another. Moreover, in Carmel she no longer

received the praise for her holiness on which she had become dependent. Finally, forced to admit to herself her failure, she clandestinely left the cloister telling no one of her intentions. But on discovering that many who had previously considered her a saint now ridiculed her for her inability to live in the monastery, she looked for a way to compensate. With the help of her confessor, who took her side, she denounced Madre Teresa and Isabel de San Jerónimo before the tribunal of the Inquisition asserting that they bore much in common with the *Alumbrados* and that they poked fun at the Inquisition. The news spread quickly through the city, and Gracián began to receive blame for bringing these discalced nuns to Seville. The Mother Foundress spent days under threat of being transferred to the Inquisition, and she was advised to make a general confession of her whole life. Gracián testifies that one day, while on his way to the nuns, he unexpectedly saw outside the monastery many horses and mules and recognized at once that they belonged to the Inquisitors and their ministers who were inside. When he did get to speak to Teresa, he found her to be exuberantly happy at the prospect of having to suffer some affront.⁶⁷ Teresa herself wrote: "For these calumnies not only failed to make me sad but gave me so great an accidental joy that I could not restrain myself" (27, 20). She goes on to say that she is not surprised about David going before the ark singing and dancing, for it is what she felt like doing at the time. But Gracián did not feel like singing and dancing. He was in anguish over the whole matter. He could not erase from his memory the fact that it was he who had ordered Teresa to come to Seville and had done so contrary to the locutions and inner light she had received from the Lord in prayer which informed her that it would be better for her to make a foundation in Madrid.

Whether Teresa was obliged to leave the cloister to testify before the tribunal is uncertain. However, at this time, she did write the accounts of her spiritual life for Rodrigo Alvarez, a Jesuit consultant to the Inquisition.⁶⁸ In the end, Teresa was acquitted of the charges, having impressed the tribunal with the humility and wisdom of her responses and the spiritual quality of her account written for Alvarez. María del Corro, though, did

manage to touch a sore spot in the community when she accused Isabel de San Jerónimo along with Teresa. Isabel was a sufferer from melancholy who would hardly have been the community's choice to present before the Inquisitors.

Conflict Among The Friars

Blessed John Soreth, when prior general of the Carmelite order (1451-1471), sought to promote the life of observance and to remove all the abuses characteristic of conventual friars in the fifteenth century. He particularly concerned himself with practices that had gained acceptance but which were out of keeping with poverty. With these practices, friars were allowed to have unlimited funds throughout their lifetime and to possess objects not consumed by use so that they could even bequeath these latter to other Carmelites or communities. This crumbling of the practice of poverty gave rise to a double standard of living, one for the well-to-do friars and one for the needy. But Spain remained isolated from the rest of the order, and consequently the zealous reform efforts of John Soreth, who had never set foot on the Iberian peninsula, bore no results there. Neither did any reform movements rise spontaneously among Carmelites in Spain despite the general interest in the betterment of religious orders on the part of the Crown.

During Nicholas Audet's term as prior general (1524-1562), the Carmelites again turned seriously to reform. The matters for reform concerned again the practice of poverty, but also the following: education, to correct ignorance among the brethren and to prevent the inept and unlearned from ascending the pulpit; Divine Office, in that every house with at least six priests was obliged to celebrate the day and night Office in choir; and laws dealing with residence outside the monastery and exits from the house. But Audet's efforts to bring about reform in Spain occasioned an exodus of friars. In Castile, over half the personnel of the province abandoned the order, leaving that province with few houses and a scarcity in numbers. In Andalusia, all the reform efforts simply failed.

Following Audet in the leadership role of prior general came John Baptist Rossi, Teresa's esteemed Rubeo. He continued the reforming effort but within the framework of existing obligations. When he came to Spain for his visitation in 1566, the province of Castile, reformed under Audet, consisted of nine monasteries and a little more than a hundred friars.

In chapter two of her *Foundations*, Teresa writes glowingly of Rubeo, who with much kindness consoled and encouraged her. One matter, however, about which the prior general showed reluctance had to do with the foundation of some houses for friars who would live in a style similar to Teresa's nuns. When the Madre wrote to him again after his departure, making her request once more, Rubeo acceded. In a letter from Barcelona, August 10, 1567, he gave his permission, insisting that these foundations be referred to as houses or monasteries of contemplative Carmelites. These friars were also to help their neighbor when the occasion arose and were to observe the "old constitutions" (Soreth's, revised by Audet and Rubeo himself). They were to be subject to the provincial, and only two houses were to be allowed. Not having succeeded in his attempts to reform the Andalusians, Rubeo shows a certain fear of possible problems in the tone of his letter. "It is not our intention to give occasion to hellish quarrels," he says, "but to promote the perfection of Carmelite religious life." The contemplative Carmelites must live united to the obedience of the province of Castile, and "if at any time any friar under pretext of living in greater perfection should seek to separate himself from the province by the favor of princes and with briefs and other concessions of Rome, we pronounce and declare them men moved and tempted by the evil spirit, authors of seditions, quarrels, contentions, and ambitions to the deceit and loss of their souls."⁶⁹ As an apostolic commissary at the time, Rubeo was empowered to use a formula employed by the Holy See in its own documents. Unfortunately, many of the things Rubeo feared actually took place.

If Teresa proved capable of preserving homogeneity and coherence among the foundations of nuns through her inspirational leadership, she did not achieve this among the friars. After her idyllic account in chapter fourteen of the *Foundations*

about the life lived by the first little community of friars in Duruelo, she makes the significant remark that they paid no attention to her when she made some observations concerning their austerities.

Duruelo was so isolated that growth came slowly. Teresa was delighted, then, when she met Ambrosio Mariano who provided her with the opportunity for making a second foundation of friars, this one in Pastrana. Growth in numbers came more quickly in Pastrana, but some of the new members happened to be friars from Andalusia who had got into trouble with the prior general in his attempts to bring about reform there. In fact, Andalusia soon became the source of nothing but trouble for the Mother Foundress's ideal. When the prior general heard about some of the new admissions, he wrote in a letter August 8, 1570: "We have heard that things have been happening that could give rise to dissent and quarrels." He requires members of the provinces of Spain and Portugal to have his written permission before seeking admission to "our contemplative Carmelites, or discalced as they are popularly called." He then goes on to forbid the contemplative Carmelites to receive those members of the Andalusian province who had been punished by him or had been rebellious and contumacious in their obligation of obedience to him. He forbids this "lest the whole flock of contemplatives be corrupted by them."⁷⁰

At the very time that Rubeo had been in Spain on his mission of reform, Philip II was engaged in plans for his own reform of the religious orders, the Carmelites among them. This comes as no surprise when it is pointed out that according to Philip's information the cause for the success of Lutheranism in the north of Europe could be attributed to laxity among the friars.⁷¹

With the brief *Maxime cuperemus* obtained from Pius V on December 2, 1566, the king, in a first move, instructed bishops to carry out visitations of religious orders. These visitations were to be done through delegates who in turn were to be accompanied by serious religious appointed by the provincial of the respective religious order. But as for Carmelites, Trinitarians, and Mercedarians (orders that were considered to be lacking in the number of observants who would be able to assist the bishops

in carrying out the reform of the conventuals), another brief, *Superioribus mensibus*, April 16, 1567, instructed that two Dominicans were to accompany the bishop's delegate.

This action of the king ignored the privilege of religious exemption, held by these orders, and also the decree of the Council of Trent that entrusted reform to the religious superiors. Moreover, the Carmelites in the general chapter of 1564 had pronounced themselves to be observants and denounced conventualism. Rubeo made a report to the Holy See, both giving an account of his visitation in Spain and asking that the king's visitation be revoked. But in the meantime, Philip's first steps toward reform failed. The situation, in fact, worsened when Philip decided to dispense with the assistance of the Dominicans and leave everything in the hands of diocesan clergy and laymen. The Carmelites in Andalusia who had been expelled or removed from office by Rubeo managed to find favor with the new visitators, were reinstated, and were absolved from excommunication. Learning of this, Rubeo indignantly pointed out that the excommunication he had imposed was reserved by Pope Callistus III to the Holy See.

Perhaps because of the complaints of the superiors general, Pius V decided to remove the visitation from the hands of the bishops. Formally revoking the brief *Superioribus mensibus*, on January 13, 1570, the pope turned to another solution and put the work of reform into the hands of the generals, each being responsible for his own order. He made a careful exception, however, regarding the Carmelites, Trinitarians, and Mercedarians, entrusting their reform to Dominican friars who would remain in their offices as apostolic commissaries for four years. At the end of the four years, the mandate would be extended if necessary.

Pedro Fernández and Francisco Vargas, two Dominican friars, were named visitators of the Carmelites, the former of those in Castile, the latter, of those in Andalusia. They received powers to move religious from house to house and province to province, to assist superiors in their offices, and to depute other superiors from among either the Dominicans or the Carmelites. They were entitled to perform all acts necessary for the visitation, cor-

rection, and reform of both head and members of all houses of friars and nuns.

Rubeo responded anxiously by dispatching twenty commissaries to defend the rights of the Carmelite order in Spain. These commissaries were given instructions not to allow directives contrary to the order's legislation for reform or to permit any infringement on the order's privileges granted by the Holy See. Much of the controversy that arose between Teresa's friars and those of the observance grew out of the various interpretations that the authorities in question gave to the powers granted them by the Holy See.

The Dominican Fernández tactfully and diplomatically carried out his responsibilities within the normal legislative channels of the Carmelite order. It was he who ordered Teresa in 1571, after his visitation of the Incarnation in Avila, to interrupt her work as foundress and return to her original monastery as prioress (19, 6-7; 21, 1). Teresa received instructions to do all she could to improve the material and spiritual welfare of that house.

She accepted only reluctantly,⁷² and the nuns of the Incarnation protested vehemently at first. But Madre Teresa knew how to win their favor and soon managed to solve some of the hopeless problems of poverty. For assistance in her efforts to improve the spiritual life of the nuns, Teresa appealed to Fernández for Fray John of the Cross, then rector at the new Carmelite college in Alcalá, that he might serve as confessor for the nuns. Fray John stayed on as confessor at the Incarnation until his sad capture and imprisonment in 1577. At the Incarnation, the two saints acted as powerful spiritual catalysts enabling Fernández to write to the duchess of Alba as early as 1573 that though in the monastery of the Incarnation there were one hundred thirty nuns, there was as much tranquility and sanctity there as among the ten or twelve discalced nuns in the monastery of Alba. It was during this time, while she officiated as prioress of the Incarnation, that Teresa under the direction of John of the Cross received the grace of spiritual marriage.

Between Teresa and the Dominican Fernández a deep mutual respect and an easy working relationship developed. More

and more Madre Teresa turned to Fernández for her necessary permissions. In June of 1571 Teresa had written to Doña María de Mendoza, sister of the bishop of Avila, about a certain permission: "We can ask for a licence from Father Provincial, and your Ladyship can tell the community to receive them. As an alternative, we can go to Father Visitor, who will give his consent at once. I can work with him better than with Father Provincial, who simply will not answer my letters however often I write to him."

As in the case of the nuns, Fernández also placed Teresa's friars in positions of responsibility, hoping thereby to promote reform. This move, however, was damaging to the new contemplative communities just starting to get on their feet.

Andalusia was another story. Desiring to push reform among the friars of his district, Francisco Vargas wrote in November of 1571 to Fray Ambrosio Mariano, whom Teresa had recruited for the foundation of her friars in Pastrana, and ordered him to make a foundation in Seville like the one they had in Pastrana. This foundation, he decided would be exempt from the jurisdiction of the Carmelite provincial in Andalusia and would receive only those aspirants coming directly from the world. Vargas's orders to Mariano went contrary to the restrictions Rubeo had set up for the contemplative friars. In reality, by turning to Teresa's friars for help in reforming the Carmelite order, both visitors drew them beyond the limits established by the prior general when he allowed for a few houses of contemplative friars.

During the years 1570-1575 seven houses of contemplative friars were founded in addition to the two original ones (Duruelo and Pastrana) in which Teresa played a more direct role. The four new ones in Castile (Alcalá, Altomira, La Roda, and Almodóvar del Campo) were founded with the prior general's permission. The problem arose over those founded in Andalusia (in Seville, Granada, and La Peñuela). These latter three were requested, against Rubeo's orders, by the Dominican visitor Vargas.

By the time the four year term of the Dominican visitors had expired along with Teresa's term as prioress at the Incarnation, the total picture had so changed that the prior general, the

provincials, and even Teresa herself were alarmed. Rubeo was alarmed because monasteries were being founded apart from consultation with the prior general and even against his express prohibition; the provincials, because the new Carmelite communities arising within their districts were practically autonomous, with innovations and customs foreign to the order's tradition; Teresa, because she observed the friars going off in a direction different from the one she had envisioned. In her *Foundations* she reveals her feeling when she writes that if it were not for the trust she had in God she would have at times regretted ever having founded the friars. She recognized that they had no leader and laments that they had no constitutions that they all agreed upon. "In each house they did as they saw fit," she disapprovingly comments (23, 12). Without presenting her reasons, which we can only guess at, Teresa at first wanted no foundations of her friars or nuns in Andalusia. When, in fact, she made the foundation in Beas, she thought she was making it in Castile. Not until the deed was done did she discover that, though in the civil province of Castile, Beas belonged to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Andalusia.

It was here in Beas that her overwhelming first meeting with "Padre Maestro Fray Jerónimo Gracián de la Madre de Dios" took place. Here was the answer to the Mother Foundress's prayers. A friar with the learning, spirituality, and apparent political skills necessary to salvage what Teresa had begun. Of this elevating experience in Beas she writes: "So during those days I went about with such excessive consolation and happiness that indeed I was surprised at myself" (24, 2). But what was perhaps most remarkable about Gracián was that he actually listened to Teresa's opinions about the friars, their problems, and other matters. Later, Gracián himself wrote enthusiastically about this meeting: "She taught me everything she knew, giving me so many doctrines, rules, and counsels that I could have written a large book about what she taught me."⁷³ Previous to this fateful meeting, Gracián had been named apostolic visitor of the Carmelites in Andalusia by Vargas. At the time of the appointment, Gracián had been professed little more than a year, having been ordained to the priesthood and having received his doctorate in theology before entering the order.

When the Carmelite order convened in chapter at Piacenza, May 22, 1575, no time was lost in addressing the question of the discalced friars in Andalusia. The chapter reaffirmed in no uncertain terms the position the prior general had thus far taken. Those who had been made superiors against the obedience due superiors within the order itself, or who had accepted offices or lived in monasteries or places prohibited by the same superiors, should be removed. The monasteries of discalced friars in Andalusia were to be abandoned within three days. The friars and nuns were not to go completely barefoot, "since nowhere in the rule is such a thing prescribed." Neither were they to be referred to as "discalced," but as "contemplatives" or "primitives." No rift was to be created in the order by calling some "discalced" and others "of the cloth."

The previous year, on August 13, 1574, Gregory XIII, the new pope, had declared the end of the Dominican visitation and ordained that from then on the Carmelites should be visited by the prior general and his delegates. However, what had been established by the Dominican visitators was to remain in effect. Afterward, the papal nuncio Ormaneto received assurance that the recall of the Dominican visitators in no way affected his own powers as nuncio to visit and reform religious orders. Offended because the visitation had been called officially to a close without a word to him, the king imperiously declared Gregory's papal brief to be invalid because it lacked his royal placet.

It was precisely while Gracián was in Beas that the nuncio, Ormaneto, sent for him in Madrid, and on August 3, 1575, the nuncio not only confirmed Gracián in his present position but extended his authority as reformer and visitator to the friars and nuns of Castile as well. Gracián's motive in accepting arose not so much out of any desire to reform the friars of the observance but to protect Teresa's friars, or the contemplatives, from being undone. Also, during the time of his visitation, he aimed to make more foundations of his own friars so that the group might become well rooted. Others hurled accusations of boldness and ambition at him for accepting the charge.⁷⁴

Previously, while in Beas, Gracián had ordered the Mother Foundress to go deeper into Andalusia against her strong desires and make a foundation in Seville, a rich and sensuous city of

thirty thousand inhabitants, looked upon as the gate to the Indies. Teresa resignedly complied, writing: "This is a favor our Lord grants me, to have the opinion that these superiors are right in everything" (24, 4). Indeed, the foundation in Seville turned out to be one of the most trying of all Teresa's foundations. If her brother Lorenzo had not returned at that time from the Indies and offered his assistance, the Madre's foundation might never have succeeded. The people of Andalusia were not at first as interested in helping her as were those in Castile.

An added trial for Teresa now was her fear for Gracián's life. When, as reformer, Gracián returned from Madrid in 1575 to the Carmelite friars' monastery in Seville with his patent letter from the nuncio, the friars demanded that he give it to them so that they could make a copy of it. When Gracián understandably refused to let it out of his possession, a minor revolt took place among the eighty friars. The rumor moved quickly through the city that Gracián's life was in danger. Of course, it made its way to the doors of Teresa's Carmel where the nuns were already in prayer since they knew that this was the day, the feast of Our Lady's Presentation in the Temple (November 21) in which the feared visitation was to begin. They were also familiar with those frightening stories about how, not long before, a reformer of friars in Catalonia had been stabbed to death. As happens with rumors, by the time the tale reached the Carmel, the version told that Gracián had been killed. As a reprisal for the uproar and seeming disobedience, and against Teresa's advice, the young Carmelite visitor excommunicated the friars, thereby bringing more scandal to an already highly scandalized city.

Though Fray Jerónimo had asserted his authority, the quarreling over whether or not he had any did not allow him to begin his visitation until January. As things turned out, though, Gracián was anything but a tyrant to be feared. In the process of his visitation, there were those, in fact, who complained against him that he was not carrying out the visitation with the required severity. These advocates of greater severity were in particular Fray Ambrosio Mariano and Juan Calvo de Padilla, a Castilian priest who worked on the reform of the religious orders and who was esteemed by the king. On the other hand, there were those

who resisted Gracián's measured steps for improvement by spreading malicious lies about him, hoping to damage his reputation in Madrid and Rome.

During the period in which some of these perturbing events were taking place, Rubeo, on December 10, 1575, appointed Jerónimo Tostado visitor, reformer, and commissary general of the Spanish provinces. His instructions to Tostado were to enforce the statutes laid down by the visitors of Pius V, those of the general chapter of Piacenza and especially those of Gregory XIII. There were two restrictions made on his powers: he could not grant permission to anyone to join the contemplative friars nor could he allow the contemplatives to make any foundations. Rubeo reserved these rights to himself. Since Tostado's mission was preceded by the rumor that he had come to destroy Teresa's work, Ormaneto advised Tostado to postpone his visitation in Andalusia and go to Portugal first.

The movement among Teresa's friars had now gone so far that it was impossible to reverse the tide. Their numbers came close to three hundred, and they had gained considerable prestige among the people and at the royal court. They were also receiving strong support from Ormaneto. On August 3, 1576, under Gracián's initiative, these friars declared themselves a separate province, which consisted of the ten monasteries of nuns in addition to the nine of friars.

In June of 1575, Teresa herself had already written a worried letter to Rubeo in an attempt to explain everything. She assured him of her love, admiration, and prayers and of the prayers of all the nuns as well. As for the friars, she writes frankly: "They are defending their position, and I really think that they are Your Reverence's faithful sons and desire not to displease you. But still I cannot fail to blame them. It now seems they are beginning to realize that they should have followed a different course so as not to have displeased Your Reverence." After pointing out that the houses were founded by virtue of the apostolic authority of Vargas, she mentions the number of the friars and the esteem they held in the minds of the people and even of the king. She does this so as to warn Rubeo against any drastic measures that would stir up the people and king against the order. Then she

pleads: "As a true father, forget the past and remember that Your Reverence is a servant of the Virgin and that she will be displeased if you cease to help those who, by the sweat of their brow, seek the increase of her order." In another plea for peace, in November of 1575, she urges Gracián to communicate with the prior general and show him the proper deference: "It is enough that things are being done against his will without your having to fail to send him some kind words or to pay any attention to him. You see, my Father, it is to him we promised obedience, and nothing can be lost thereby."

In a further effort to explain to Rubeo, in February 1576, she zealously defends Gracián, describing how he resisted and was unwilling to undertake the visitation in Andalusia which was imposed on him. In the same vein, she seeks to raise Rubeo's opinion of his own Andalusian Carmelites: "They have helped us in every way since we have been here, and, as I wrote to your Reverence, I have found here men of much talent and learning. I would certainly be happy if we had some like them in our Castilian province." And she adds in her characteristic fashion: "I am not surprised that they are tired of all the visitations and changes."

Turning again to the question of Gracián and Mariano, she obviously puts all that she has into a plea in their favor: "But let Your Reverence consider that it is characteristic of children to err and of parents to pardon and not look at faults. For the love of our Lord, I beseech your Reverence to do me this favor." She then puts in a plea for herself, that Rubeo might listen to her suggestions: "Consider that this would be advisable for many reasons which perhaps, Your Reverence, being over there, does not understand as well as I do here, and that, even though we women are not suited for giving counsel, sometimes we are right."

Teresa returned from Seville to Castile in June of 1576, and Gracián concluded his visitation in Andalusia in May of 1577. Before calling a chapter in the south, Gracián journeyed to Madrid to consult with the nuncio. But an unexpected disaster overturned his plans. Ormaneto died in the odor of sanctity on the night of June 17, 1577, with nothing to his name, having given all to the poor. Though the king informed Gracián that the lat-

ter's faculties as visitor had not ceased with the death of the nuncio, the new nuncio, Felipe Segá, did not agree and sought to persuade the king to give up the plan of reform initiated by Ormaneto so that the religious orders would be left free to reform themselves. In addition, the nuncio informed Gracián that his faculties had ceased with the death of Ormaneto.

Though Segá had come to Spain with a bias against Teresa and her friars, he wanted first of all to investigate the entire matter to form a better judgment of what was transpiring. The king, who on the contrary was biased in favor of Teresa and her friars, approved but also insisted that the nuncio with the help of assistants obtain correct information about the differences between the two groups of Carmelites.

When the contemplative friars with seeming contempt celebrated a chapter at Almodóvar del Campo, in October of 1578, a chapter that had been decreed two years previously by Gracián when he had been in power, Segá took quick action. On October 16, 1578, he declared the chapter null and void and under pain of excommunication forbade Antonio de Jesús, who had been elected provincial, to act as provincial. Segá for safe measure then placed Teresa's friars and nuns under the jurisdiction of the provincials of Castile and Andalusia, Juan Gutiérrez and Diego Cárdenas respectively. These provincials clamorously asserted their authority, serving notice of it to the contemplative friars and nuns in a rude manner, scandalous to the people. Teresa writes of the nuns' experience when the provincial's emissaries came to St. Joseph's in Avila: "It was a morning of trial: all who were there—justices, lawyers, and gentlemen—were shocked at their lack of proper religious conduct, and I was very distressed. I would have gladly told them what I thought, but we didn't dare speak."⁷⁵ These public scenes were repeated in the other Teresian monasteries both in Castile and Andalusia.

The leaders among the Teresian friars, Antonio de Jesús, Ambrosio Mariano, Gabriel de la Assunción, and Gracián were excommunicated and placed under arrest in various monasteries until the investigation could be completed. Gracián was confined to the Carmel of Madrid where, he honestly admits, some of the brethren among the observants treated him very well.

Previous to all of this turmoil, Rubeo had died in September of 1578, at the age of 69, as a result of injuries suffered two years before in a fall from his mule. Teresa wrote sorrowfully of this to Gracián: "On the day I heard it I did nothing but weep and weep and I felt great pain over all the trials we had caused him, which he certainly did not deserve. If we had gone to him about the matter everything would have proceeded smoothly."⁷⁶

While the leaders were in prison, Teresa carried on a campaign in favor of her friars through letters and recommendations to as many influential people as she could think of. She fired off letters to Madrid, Rome, and elsewhere, to the king, to bishops, and to noblemen, to anyone she thought could help.

When the nuncio's investigators learned of the insolent ways in which the provincials were carrying out the visitations of the contemplative houses and of the lies that had been uttered against Gracián, some among them wished first to take care of that matter and leave the investigation, especially of the alleged faults of Gracián, for later. Segá said "No," insisting that first Gracián be punished.

Gracián was in a dilemma. He knew that if he were to deny the accusations made against him and a process in his defense were begun, Teresa's friars would in the meantime lose out. On the other hand, if he submitted to the charges, he would be admitting through his silence to what was not true. Consulting a number of theologians who, as is their custom, came up with different opinions, he decided finally, for the good of the discalced, not to bother defending himself.⁷⁷

The appointed judges became scrupulous about the penalty to inflict on him because they knew he was not blameworthy. Segá accused one of them of trying to be an advocate rather than a judge; the accused judge snapped back that Segá was trying to be an accuser rather than a judge. In the end, Gracián was absolved of all censures, but deprived of active and passive voice, sent to the monastery of the contemplatives in Alcalá, given penances, and forbidden to write or receive letters, especially from nuns, or otherwise interfere in the affairs of the order.

As for Mariano, Teresa confesses in the above-mentioned letter to Rubeo in defense of the impetuous friar, that she herself

had suffered again and again from him but learned to pass it over since she knew what a good man he was. When the commission came to investigate Mariano and take his confession, the notary asked him when it was he had last spoken or written to the king. As might have been expected, Mariano's reply was quick and flippant: "not since the last time." When the notary rebuked him for making fun of the nuncio, Mariano defended himself by asserting that the question deserved no other response since it implied that a subject was at fault for speaking or writing to a king as Catholic as Philip. Of course, the king was kept informed of all these happenings. Perhaps he even smiled, a rare accomplishment for Philip II, on hearing the story about Mariano. Understandably, Mariano escaped punishment and set off for Jerez de la Frontera on an engineering project sponsored by the king.⁷⁸

At that point Nicolás Doria entered the scene. When at the end of the fourteenth century Barcelona's leading private banks failed, Italian financiers began to assume the role of principal bankers to the kings of Aragón. Genoa in particular made skillful use of opportunities and gradually succeeded in converting itself into the financial capital of the western Mediterranean. The Genoese settled in Córdoba, Cádiz, and Seville and entrenched themselves at one strategic point after another in the Castilian economy. Nicolás Doria was a Genoese banker who had come to the notice of the king on account of his abilities. But so greatly was he frightened on one occasion in which he almost perished in a shipwreck that he converted completely to God and sacrificed his fortune to the poor, ultimately joining Teresa's friars in Seville at the age of forty-two. It was to Doria that Teresa turned when all the leaders of her friars were under arrest or in exile. The shrewd Genoese banker succeeded in disguising his real reasons for being in Madrid and while living in a monastery of the observant Carmelites managed the affairs of Teresa's friars without raising the least suspicion.

After Gracián received his sentence, a member of the investigating commission resigned, forcing the nuncio Sega to ask the king for a replacement. In response Philip II, "took the initiative to favor us" and appointed Teresa's close friend, the Dominican

Pedro Fernández. Of Fernández, Teresa says: "He knew well the truth about how each group lived, for the desire of us all was nothing other than that this be known." And expressing the relief she felt on hearing the news, she adds: "And so when I saw that the king had named him, I considered the matter taken care of, as by the mercy of God it is" (28, 6). What the commission did was to place Angel de Salazar, a former provincial of the observant Carmelites in Castile, in charge of the contemplatives. He was, in Gracián's view, a gentle and discreet man whose main concern was to console the afflicted and promote peace.⁷⁹

At the beginning of chapter 28 in her *Foundations*, Teresa gives a quick sketch of these events and promises that they will be written up by someone who had more firsthand information about the whole affair than she. This "someone" was Gracián who did later write his account, recently discovered, of the friars' foundations. What Teresa insistently reminds her readers is that in all the sorry conflict, her greatest trial was the displeasure of the prior general. She sums up her dilemma and the unhappy situation in chapter 28:

"And so that I might not be helping the friars make foundations, he was induced into becoming displeased with me, which was the greatest trial I suffered in the work of these foundations, even though I have suffered many. On the one hand, very learned men who were my confessors would not agree that I should stop and counseled me to help toward the growth of the work, pointing out that I clearly rendered service to our Lord and helped toward the increase of our order; and on the other hand, going against the will of my superior was like a death to me. For apart from the obligation I had toward him because he was my superior, I loved him very tenderly and there were many reasons for obeying him. It is true that even though I wanted to please him by obeying his order, I could not because there were apostolic visitors whom I was obliged to obey" (28., 2).

During the years of these troubles, Teresa was prevented from making any more foundations. Instead, as she points out, "we were all occupied unceasingly in prayers and penances so that

our Lord would preserve the houses already founded if doing so would be for His service." Not until four years after the foundation in Seville did she once again, in 1580, take to the road. This was the year in which Teresa's friars were given the permission to form a separate province, "which was all that we were desiring for the sake of our peace and tranquility." Teresa summed up the happy outcome: "Now we are all at peace, calced and discalced; no one can hinder us from serving our Lord. Hence, my Brothers and Sisters, since His Majesty has heard your prayers so well, let us make haste to serve Him" (29, 30-32).

The Last Days

A peasant girl, born in 1549 in Almendral (in the province of Toledo), entered St. Joseph's in Avila at the age of twenty-one and took the name Ana de San Bartolomé. Favored by God with extraordinary mystical graces, this Carmelite, who was beatified in 1917, accepted them with remarkable simplicity, and as a result of these graces felt strong desires to serve others in the community, sometimes taking on three jobs at a time. After Teresa broke her arm on Christmas eve of 1577, she chose Ana to act as both her infirmarian and secretary. Blessed Ana became Teresa's constant companion. It is to her that we owe the straightforward, poignant account of Teresa's last days.⁸⁰

When Madre Teresa left Avila on January 2, 1582, for the foundation in Burgos she took her niece Teresita, the daughter of her brother Lorenzo, with her. Teresita, though still not sixteen, had been living with the nuns in the enclosure with the hope of becoming a member of the community when old enough. The reason Teresa brought her niece to Burgos was to avoid giving some of the unimpressed relatives a chance to pressure the young girl into leaving so that they might gain Don Lorenzo's bequest to the monastery of St. Joseph's. Once the drawn-out resistance of the archbishop of Burgos to the new foundation of nuns wore down and the foundation was established, Teresa eagerly, though still in a precarious state of health, set about plans to return to Avila. The time for Teresita's profession was approaching, and

she did not want to be "taking this young girl from one place to another." In addition, Teresa's orders from Gracián were to return to her monastery in Avila to act as prioress there as soon as the foundation in Burgos was made.

Ana de San Bartolomé has pointed out that in the dreadful journey to Burgos with the rains, snow, and flooded roads and bridges, Teresa's health was no better than the weather. So wet were they all on their arrival in Burgos that they stayed before the warm fire that night longer than usual. This caused Teresa so much harm that she began to experience dizziness during the night and to suffer from severe vomitings. Since her throat was already inflamed, these latter caused a bleeding sore. During the three following months, with all their disappointments over prospects for a foundation in Burgos, Teresa was seriously ill, and her throat was so sore that she had to live on liquids.

Finally, at the end of July, she was able to leave Burgos. She stopped off at Palencia and remained there until August 25 when she left for Valladolid. In a letter from Valladolid on August 26, she discloses her plan to be there until September 8, the feast of our Lady, then to proceed to Medina, and finally, "with the help of God, . . . [to] be in Avila by the end of this month."

The Mother Foundress's stay in Valladolid was unpleasant. Some of Teresa's relatives, in particular the mother-in-law of her nephew Francisco, were protesting Don Lorenzo's will, and María Bautista, the prioress of Valladolid, a relative and long-standing friend of Teresa's, favored the protesting relatives. Since the Mother Foundress held out firmly against them, María Bautista became ill-tempered. According to Ana de San Bartolomé, when they were leaving the prioress slammed the door on them telling them to go and never return. Teresa expressed her feelings in a letter to Gracián: "I have had a difficult time here with Don Francisco's mother-in-law. She is a strange woman."⁸¹ She goes on to say that since the claim of the monastery in Avila is sound she trusts in God that the monastery will eventually inherit everything.

Arriving probably September 17 in Medina, with the intention of remaining about ten days and then moving on to Avila, Teresa received a distressing order. Antonio de Jesús who was acting as

vicar provincial while Gracián was in Andalusia came to Medina with the news that the Mother Foundress must go to Alba de Tormes because of the election of a prioress that was to take place there and because the duchess of Alba wanted to see her. Still weak from her lingering illness, longing to get back to Avila, Teresa fell into a deep sadness. The vicar provincial's orders and their effect on the Madre remained fixed in Ana's mind. This incident became for the devoted infirmarian a key example of Teresa's virtue. Ana testifies that she had never seen Teresa suffer so much over anything superiors had ordered her.

As for the election of a prioress in Alba, it seems there was little that was edifying in the community. No doubt Father Antonio thought Teresa's presence would inspire better behavior and change some attitudes. In a previous letter, dated August 6, to the founding benefactress, Teresa Layz, Madre Teresa indicated some of the problems of the Alba community and bluntly states her displeasure over the conduct of some of the nuns. She worries that no prioress will want to stay there very long since so many are trying to get out of the office. "If the nuns are what they ought to be," the Madre writes, "what will it matter to them who the prioress is? But these are childish ways and reveal attachments that are far from being appropriate for discalced nuns, nor are they found in other houses." This is the community in which Teresa was to end her days.

But before she left Medina, the Mother Foundress also met with some unpleasant behavior by the prioress there. When she made an observation about something that was not going well, the prioress, Alberta Bautista, took the matter badly, became upset, and went to her room. Teresa, wearied that her remark would be so upsetting to someone who usually showed a good spirit, grew heavy of heart and also went to her cell without eating and without sleeping the entire night. The next morning when they left, Ana tells us, they were sent on their way with nothing to eat for the journey. At one point, near Peñaranda de Bacamonte, Teresa thought she was going to faint, so ill and weak did she feel. There was no food to give her other than some dried figs. Blessed Ana records her own distressed feelings: "When I saw that nothing could be found to buy, I could not

look at the Saint without weeping, for judging by her face she seemed half dead. I can never describe the anguish I then felt. My heart seemed to be breaking, and I could only weep when I saw the plight she was in, for I saw her dying and could do nothing to help her."⁸²

The travelers arrived in Alba around six in the evening, probably on September 21, the feast of St. Matthias. Greeting the nuns with much happiness and peace, Teresa then told them of her exhaustion, "God help me, how tired I am," and went to bed earlier than she had in years. Ana doubted whether she had a healthy bone in her body.

The Mother Foundress, though, was not yet daunted, and for the next eight days was up and down, receiving Communion daily, even reciting the Divine Office, and attending as well to some business matters in the parlor. One of the visitors to the parlor during these days was the troubled Teresa Layz who undoubtedly wanted to discuss the coming elections and other community problems.

Another of the visitors was Agustín de los Reyes, one of her friars, desirous of convincing Teresa that the nuns in Salamanca should purchase another house in that university town. But Teresa opposed the idea because the desired house was in too noisy a place. After three hours of conversation with the Madre in which he failed to get her to budge, Fray Agustín concluded by telling her that nothing else could be done anyway since the deed was already done. "The deed is done?" asked Teresa, and then she categorically stated, "anything but done, nor will it ever be."⁸³ Eight days after her death, the negotiations for the new house in Salamanca collapsed.

Also visiting Teresa during these days, perhaps on September 28, was her sister Doña Juana de Ahumada to whom Teresa manifested her desire to move on to Avila. But on September 29 the Madre went to bed never to rise again. She had suffered a hemorrhaging from which it was understood that she would die. Doctors who have studied the remaining descriptions of her last illness believe that the actual cause of Teresa's death was cancer of the uterus.

On October 1, the community held their elections for prioress.

They had attempted to discuss these matters with the Madre but she had refused to get involved.

On October 3, in the morning, the barber-surgeon put the Mother Foundress through the painful ordeal of cupping, a remedy that was prevalent in those times and meant to facilitate the excretion of certain liquids and humors.

At five in the afternoon, Teresa asked that Padre Antonio bring her Communion. Although he wanted to postpone it till the next day, he finally gave in to her wishes. While waiting for the Blessed Sacrament, she asked the Sisters to pardon her for the bad example she had given and to obey the rule and constitutions with much perfection. She begged them not to follow in her footsteps since she had been the worst in observing them.

When the Eucharist was brought in, her countenance changed and grew radiant with a kind of reverent beauty, making her look much younger. The impulses of love became so ardent that it seemed she who had been dying now wanted to leap from the bed to receive her Lord. She spoke aloud fervent words of love: "O my Lord and my Spouse, now the hour has arrived for us to go forth from this exile, and my soul rejoices in oneness with You over what I have so much desired." She also uttered fervent prayers of thanksgiving to God for having made her a daughter of the Church and enabling her to die within it. Confessing that she was a great sinner, she prayed over and over the prayers of psalm 51: "a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn"; "cast me not out of your presence"; "a clean heart create for me, O God." At nine in the evening she asked to be anointed and assisted in reciting the psalms and other prayers.

In the testimony given by witnesses, there is a general agreement concerning the themes of the prayers spoken aloud by Teresa on the eve of her death before and after receiving the Eucharist and after receiving the Sacrament of the Sick. On the one hand, she revealed her intense feelings of sorrow at being a sinner, repeating pleas for mercy from God. This she did through verses taken from a psalm and spoken in Latin as she had learned them through choral recitation of the prayer of the Church. On the other hand she revealed her awareness of approaching union with Christ her Bridegroom and her urgent longings for that

moment. The words denote an active surge of loving energy and searching rather than an attitude of passive waiting. "Now the hour has struck."

Further, in her thankfulness for being a daughter of the Church, she rejoiced in the thought of her Mother the Church, where she found the deposit of revelation, the norm of faith, the administration of the sacraments, the Christian family; this Church was now to offer her the Blood of Christ, the grace of redemption.

The following day, the feast of St. Francis (the little poor man of Assisi), her face was aglow, and with a crucifix in her hands she remained in prayer, in deep quiet and peace, without speaking or stirring throughout the whole day. In the evening, a couple of hours before she died, Padre Antonio told Blessed Ana who had been continually at her foundress's side to go and get something to eat. But Teresa began looking about, and when Antonio asked her if she was looking for Sister Ana, she gestured affirmatively. When Ana returned, Teresa smiled and with tender love took the humble Sister's arms and placed her head in them. In this manner the saintly Madre remained until she died between nine and ten that evening. She was surrounded by all the nuns in the community. Her niece Teresita, Blessed Ana, Padre Antonio de Jesús, and Padre Tomás de la Asunción were also present.

After her death, her countenance turned as white as alabaster and being freed of every wrinkle took on an extraordinary beauty. A powerful and pleasing fragrance began to flow from her body and spread through the entire house, indeed as the truths of her profound writings would one day spread through the world. Hers had been a life unexplainable without God and without the grace that comes through Jesus Christ.

The Autograph

The autograph of *The Foundations*, once finished, was probably left at the monastery of Alba de Tormes. Later it was given to Luis de Leon, the noted Augustinian friar and scholar at Salamanca, who was assigned the task of preparing the first edition

of Teresa's writings. In his edition of Teresa's works, published by Guillermo Foquel in Salamanca (1588), *The Foundations* was omitted. The given excuse was lack of time. But few doubt that there were other reasons as well for its omission, including the references to people still alive. There were those praising Doña Casilda de Padilla, who had later left the monastery, and those exalting Padre Gracián who by that time had lost favor with the friars in authority (10, 8-16; 11, 1-11; 23, 1-13; 24, 1-4).

When Fray Luis de León died in 1591, the manuscript passed into the hands of Francisco Sobrino. But the following year, in his overall efforts to enrich his library, Philip II called for the autographs of the Castilian nun, reformer, and mystic. Along with *The Life*, *The Way of Perfection*, and the short work *On Making The Visitation*, the autograph of *The Foundations* now remains in the library of King Philip's immense royal monastery and palace, the Escorial.

During the two decades in which no printed copy of the work was available, many copies were made. In 1610, two of Teresa's closest friends, Padre Gracián and Madre Ana de Jesús, by then for all practical purposes in exile from Spain, took upon themselves the task of getting the book into print in Brussels. Since Teresa herself had given no title to the work, they named it *The Book of Her Foundations*. But their publication had its deficiencies. One of the most engaging sections of the work, found in chapters 10 and 11, dealing with the strange events surrounding the vocation of Doña Casilda de Padilla was suppressed. In addition, and not unexpectedly, Gracián introduced his own variations and corrections into the text. Finally, an account of the foundation in Granada, written by Ana de Jesús at Gracián's request, was included. This latter foundation was made by Madre Ana and Fray John of the Cross, with Teresa's authorization, at the time of the foundation in Burgos. The publication was not well received in Spain, for the book had been brought out without gaining the required permission from authorities within the order and because the editors depended on defective copies rather than the autograph which was not consulted.

Even in the autograph the industrious Gracián had crossed out some words, but wisely in such a way that usually they can

be easily read. He also inserted a number of unnecessary comments in the margins. These were made mainly in the first seven chapters. Later, the Dominican Fray Domingo Báñez crossed out many of Gracián's comments and corrections and rewrote clearly into the text Teresa's original words, reminding us that the Jesuit Francisco de Ribera had also found difficulties with Gracián's corrections in the autograph of the *Interior Castle*.⁸⁴ The corrections by Gracián that were not cancelled by Báñez passed into the printed edition of this work. Such had not been the case with Teresa's other works in the edition of Fray Luis de León who ignored Gracián's corrections. The most notable variation in the original, deciphered only in this century by Padre Silverio, is that introduced in the last paragraph of chapter 4. Teresa wrote: "The favors the Lord grants in these houses are so many that if there are one or two nuns in each house that God leads now by meditation all the rest reach perfect contemplation"(4, 8). Gracián crossed out some of the words and emended the text so that it read: "The favors the Lord grants in these houses are so many that though all the nuns are brought by God along the way of meditation, some reach perfect contemplation."

Not until 1880, when Don Vicente de la Fuente published a photocopy of the original did readers have a faithful copy. Padre Silverio in his critical edition of the works of St. Teresa was the first to offer the public a reliable text.⁸⁵

The Book of Foundations may be divided as follows:

1. On founding more monasteries (chs. 1-2)
2. Medina del Campo (ch. 3)
3. Counsels on prayer (ch. 4)
 - A. The substance of perfect prayer (ch. 5, no. 2)
 - B. How to acquire love (ch. 5, nos. 3-17)
4. Cautions about a form of spiritual absorption (ch. 6)
5. Counsels on melancholy (ch. 7)
6. Counsels on revelations and visions (ch. 8)
7. Malagón (ch. 9)
8. Valladolid (chs. 10-12)
 - A. The vocation of Doña Casilda de Padilla (ch. 10, no. 8-ch. 11)

- B. The life and death of Beatriz de la Encarnación (ch. 12)
- 9. The first foundation of discalced friars (chs. 13-14)
- 10. Toledo (chs. 15-16)
 - A. Examples of virtuous living (ch. 16, nos. 1-3)
 - B. Examples of virtuous dying (ch. 16, nos. 4-7)
- 11. Pastrana, both nuns and friars (ch. 17)
- 12. Salamanca (chs. 18-19)
 - A. Traveling (ch. 18, nos. 4-5)
 - B. Counsels to prioresses on mortification and obedience (ch. 18, nos. 6-13)
- 13. Alba de Tormes and the story of Teresa de Layz (ch. 20)
- 14. Segovia (ch. 21)
- 15. Beas (chs. 22-23)
 - A. The conversion and vocation of Catalina Sandoval y Godínez (ch. 22, nos. 4-24)
 - B. The life and vocation of Maestro Jerónimo Gracián de la Madre de Dios (ch. 23)
- 16. Seville (chs. 24-26)
 - A. The trials of a journey (ch. 24, nos. 5-15)
 - B. The early life and vocation of Beatriz de la Madre de Dios (ch. 26, nos. 2-15)
- 17. Caravaca (ch. 27)
 - A. Exhortations and reflections (ch. 27, nos. 10-19)
 - B. Opposition to her work (ch. 27, nos. 20-21)
 - C. Colophon (ch. 27, no. 22)
- 18. Villanueva de la Jara (ch. 28)
 - A. Persecution of the discalced friars (ch. 28, nos. 1-7)
 - B. The life and penances of Doña Catalina de Cardona (ch. 28, nos. 21-36)
- 19. Palencia and a separate province for the discalced (ch. 29)
- 20. Soria (ch. 30)
- 21. Burgos (ch. 31)
- 22. Epilogue

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Many there are deserving of our gratitude at the completion of this third volume of St. Teresa's works. Again, special thanks go to Padre Tomás Alvarez for permitting us to make use of his Spanish edition of the complete works. Once more, too, we must thank Jean Mallon, our faithful and careful typist. The Carmel in Elysburg has for a third time contributed an excellent index, and the Carmels in Danvers and Indianapolis have provided some beneficial editorial assistance. Of particular help to me in the preparation of this volume was Padre Emilio Miranda, of the Carmelite community in Avila, a specialist with regard to places and objects having to do with Teresa and her times. With much patience and expertise he guided and instructed me in my journey through Spain to all of Holy Mother's foundations. I am grateful as well to Padre Juan Bosco, also from the Carmel in Avila, who assisted me in coming to a better understanding of Spanish culture. Father Steven Payne of the Institute of Carmelite Studies who read over this introduction and offered many useful suggestions deserves a special word of thanks. All the members of the Institute provided continual encouragement, and our business manager, Brother Bryan Paquette, eased our labors with some happy words and delightful new working tools. Finally, thanks must go to my brothers in the monastery here in Brookline who spared me from kitchen duty and gave me the quiet and free time that were necessary to bring this volume to completion.

K.K.

A TERESIAN CHRONOLOGY

- 1515 March 28, born in Avila.
 April 4, baptized in the parish church of St. John the Baptist.
- 1522 Attempts to run away with her brother Rodrigo to the land
 of the Moors.
 (Adrian VI of Utrecht is elected pope; Zwingli begins his re-
 form in Zurich; Luther's translation of the New Testament
 into the German vernacular is published.)
- 1528 Doña Beatriz de Ahumada, Teresa's mother, dies.
- 1531 María de Cepeda, Teresa's older sister, marries and takes up
 residence in Castellanos de la Cañada. Teresa enters the
 convent school of Our Lady of Grace.
 (Ulrich Zwingli dies. Francisco Pizarro begins the conquest
 of Peru.)
- 1532 In the autumn Teresa leaves the convent school because of
 an illness.
- 1533 Spends time convalescing at her uncle's home in Hortigosa
 and at her older sister's home in Castellanos de la Cañada.
- 1534 Her brother Hernando leaves for Peru.
 (St. Ignatius and his companions make their vows at Mont-
 martre in Paris. Pope Clement VII, elected in 1523, dies
 and is succeeded by Paul III.)
- 1535 Teresa's brother Rodrigo leaves for Rio de la Plata.
 Nov. 2, Teresa leaves home and enters the monastery of the
 Incarnation.
 (Henry VIII decrees the Act of Supremacy proclaiming
 himself as head of the Church of England.)
- 1536 Nov. 2, Teresa receives the religious habit at the Incarna-
 tion.

- (Erasmus dies. John Calvin publishes *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and takes up the work begun by Zwingli in Switzerland.)
- 1537 Nov. 3, Teresa makes her religious profession of vows at the Incarnation.
- 1538 Because of illness she leaves the Incarnation so as to undergo treatment in Becedas. Stops at her uncle's in Hortigosa and her sister's in Castellanos de la Cañada. Reads Osuna's *The Third Spiritual Alphabet* given to her by her uncle.
- 1539 April, begins to undergo the treatments administered by the quack in Becedas.
July, returns seriously ill to her father's home in Avila. August, lapses into a coma of four days' duration. She is brought back to the Incarnation with a paralysis which lasts three years.
- 1540 Nov. 5, her brothers Lorenzo and Jerónimo leave for America in the expedition of Vaca de Castro.
(St. Ignatius of Loyola's constitutions for the Society of Jesus are approved by Paul III. In 1541, Valdivia establishes Santiago in Chile; Calvin begins to organize his church in Geneva, and John Knox his reform in Scotland.)
- 1542 Teresa feels cured through the intercession of St. Joseph. She gives up prayer out of a false sense of humility.
(Paul III publishes the bull convoking the Council of Trent; St. John of the Cross is born in Fontiveros.)
- 1543 Teresa cares for her sick father and assists him in his death (in December).
- 1544 Returns to the practice of prayer at the advice of the family confessor, Vicente Barron, O.P.
- 1546 Jan. 18, the battle of Iñaquito (Peru) in which four of Teresa's brothers fight.
Jan. 20, her brother Antonio dies from wounds suffered in battle.
Her brother Agustín leaves for America in the expedition of Pedro de la Gasca.
(Feb. 18, Martin Luther dies.)
- 1548 In the spring Teresa makes a pilgrimage to the shrine in Guadalupe for her brothers in America.

- 1549 Three of Teresa's brothers, Lorenzo, Jerónimo, and Agustín, fight in the battle of Xaquixaguana on the side of Pedro de la Gasca against Pizarro.
(Paul III dies Nov. 20 and is succeeded by Julius III Feb. 7, 1550.)
- 1553 Teresa's younger sister, Doña Juana de Ahumada marries Don Juan de Ovalle in Alba de Tormes.
- 1554 In Lent, Teresa experiences a profound conversion before a statue of the wounded Christ.
Begins to consult with a Jesuit confessor, Diego de Cetina.
- 1555 Juan de Prádanos, S.J., becomes her confessor.
(Julius III dies in March and is succeeded by Marcellus II who dies in May and is succeeded by Paul IV. The Treaty of Augsburg allows rulers of the German states to decide what religion should be professed in their territories.)
- 1556 May, Teresa receives the grace of spiritual betrothal.
Baltasar Alvarez, S.J., becomes Teresa's director.
(Charles V resigns the kingdoms of both Spain and the Spanish overseas empire in favor of his son Philip II. St. Ignatius of Loyola dies in Rome.)
- 1557 Teresa consults with St. Francis Borgia, S.J., who passes through Avila.
Her beloved brother Rodrigo crosses the Andes and dies in battle in Chile.
- 1559 The intellectual visions of Christ begin.
(Paul IV dies in Rome and is succeeded by Pius IV. The Inquisitor Fernando Valdés publishes for Spain an index of forbidden books.)
- 1560 Beginning of the imaginative visions of the risen Christ. She is ordered to mock the visions by showing the fig.
Receives the grace of the wounding of the heart while staying at the house of Doña Guiomar de Ulloa.
St. Peter of Alcántara arrives in Avila and assures Teresa, and others, that her spiritual favors are the work of God.
The frightening vision of hell.
Discussions about a new foundation begin.

Teresa writes the first extant account of her spiritual life for Pedro Ibáñez, O.P.

- 1561 Aug. 12, St. Clare promises to help her.
End of August, Teresa brings her little nephew Gonzalo back to life.
Christmas, ordered to go to Toledo to stay with Doña Luisa de la Cerda, the widow of Arias Pardo.
- 1562 January to June, resides in Toledo; meets García de Toledo, O.P.
March, meets María de Jesús and learns about the practice of poverty in the primitive rule.
June, finishes her first redaction of the *Life*. Returns from Toledo to Avila.
July, finds in Avila the apostolic rescript for the foundation of St. Joseph's dated Feb. 7.
Aug. 24, foundation of the new monastery of St. Joseph. Four novices receive the habit. Teresa is called back to the Incarnation.
Aug. 29, the city initiates a lawsuit against the monastery.
Oct. 19, St. Peter of Alcántara dies.
December, Teresa moves to St. Joseph's with permission of the provincial and takes four nuns from the Incarnation with her. Changes her name to Teresa of Jesus.
(The wars of religion begin in France between the Huguenots and Catholics.)
- 1563 Teresa is named prioress of St. Joseph's succeeding Ana de San Juan (Dávila) who returns to the Incarnation.
She writes the *Constitutions* for St. Joseph's which are approved by the bishop of Avila, Don Alvaro de Mendoza, and by Pius IV in 1565.
(The Council of Trent closes December 4.)
- 1564 May 21, John Baptist Rossi (Rubeo) is elected prior general of the Carmelite Order.
Oct. 21, the first profession, of four nuns, at St. Joseph's.
(John Calvin and Michelangelo Buonarroti die; Galileo Galilei and William Shakespeare are born.)

- 1565 January, Teresa's brother Hernando dies in Colombia.
 July 17, the bull of Pius IV confirms the practice of poverty
 of the new monastery and its submission to the bishop.
- 1566 Teresa finishes the first redaction of *The Way of Perfection*
 and, probably, the second; she also writes her *Meditations*
 on the *Song of Songs*.
 The visit of Alonso Maldonado, the Franciscan missionary
 in Mexico, to St. Joseph's.
 (Pius V is elected in January to succeed Pius IV who died the
 previous month.)
- 1567 Feb. 18, the prior general Rubeo comes to Avila for his visi-
 tation.
 April 27, Rubeo authorizes Teresa to found other monas-
 teries.
 May 16, in another patent letter the general clarifies that his
 permission excludes Andalusia.
 Aug. 15, the first foundation is made in Medina del Campo.
 Aug. 16, Rubeo gives permission for two foundations of
 Teresian friars provided they are not made in Andalusia.
 Teresa meets St. John of the Cross in Medina and convinces
 him to join her in her work.
- 1568 January, leaves Medina for Alcalá to visit the new monastery
 of María de Jesús.
 March, goes to Toledo and there agrees to make a founda-
 tion in Malagón.
 April, makes the foundation in Malagón.
 May 19, leaves Malagón for Valladolid, stopping in Toledo,
 Escalona, Avila, Duruelo, and Medina.
 Aug. 15, the foundation in Valladolid.
 In Valladolid, Teresa teaches St. John of the Cross about
 her way of life. He afterward sets out to prepare the house at
 Duruelo for the first foundation of friars, which is made
 November 28.
 Oct. 31, Teresa receives a letter from St. John of Avila giv-
 ing approval to what she wrote in her *Life*.
 (The Moorish revolt in Granada.)

- 1569 February, leaves Valladolid; passes through Medina, visits the new friars in Duruelo, and stops in Avila.
 March 24, arrives in Toledo.
 May 14, the foundation in Toledo.
 May 30, leaves Toledo for Pastrana; stops in Madrid for eight days at *Las Descalzas Reales* (discalced Franciscan nuns for members of the nobility); meets Ambrosio Mariano.
 June 23, foundation of the nuns in Pastrana.
 July 13, foundation of the friars in Pastrana.
 Writes her *Soliloquies*.
 Aug. 26, two apostolic visitators for the Carmelite order are appointed: Pedro Fernández, O.P., and Francisco Vargas, O.P.
- 1570 July 10, Teresa attends the profession in Pastrana of Ambrosio Mariano de San Benito and Juan de la Miseria.
 Nov. 1, the foundation in Salamanca.
 (Pius V excommunicates Queen Elizabeth I of England.)
- 1571 Jan. 25, foundation in Alba de Tormes.
 Oct. 14, Teresa takes possession of the office of prioress at the Incarnation.
 (Defeat of the Turkish Armada at Lepanto.)
- 1572 Arranges to have St. John of the Cross as chaplain and confessor to the nuns at the Incarnation. Jerónimo Gracián enters novitiate.
 Writes her *Response to a Spiritual Challenge*.
 Nov. 18, receives the grace of spiritual marriage.
 (Pius V dies and is succeeded by Gregory XIII; St. Bartholomew's eve, the massacre of the Huguenots; Nicolás Ormaneto arrives in Spain as nuncio.)
- 1573 Aug. 25, Teresa begins writing her *Foundations*.
- 1574 March, the journey from Alba to Segovia with St. John of the Cross for the foundation in Segovia on March 19.
 April 6-7, the nuns abandon the foundation in Pastrana by order of Teresa and are received in Segovia.
 Oct. 6, finishes her term as prioress at the Incarnation.

- 1575 Feb. 24, foundation in Beas.
 April–May, first meetings with Gracián.
 May 18, leaves Beas for Seville.
 May 24, in the church of St. Ann in Ecija makes a vow to obey Gracián.
 May 29, foundation in Seville.
 Aug. 12, her brother Don Lorenzo returns from America.
 December, she is denounced to the Inquisition of Seville.
 Receives orders from the chapter held in Piacenza to retire to one of her monasteries in Castile.
- 1576 Jan. 1, the foundation in Caravaca made by Ana de San Alberto at Teresa's orders.
 Writes accounts of her spiritual life for Rodrigo Alvarez, S.J., who is consultant to the Inquisition in Seville.
 May 28, leaves Seville with her brother and his family and stops for some days in Almodovar del Campo and Malagón.
 June 23, arrives in Toledo.
 August, writes *On Making the Visitation*.
- 1577 Feb. 6, writes the *Satirical Critique*.
 June 2, begins to write *The Interior Castle*.
 June 18, the nuncio, Ormaneto, dies.
 July, she goes to Avila.
 Aug. 29, the new nuncio, Sega, arrives in Madrid.
 Nov. 29, Teresa concludes *The Interior Castle*.
 Dec. 3, St. John of the Cross is taken prisoner, and the following day Teresa writes a letter to the king pleading for help and justice on the saint's behalf.
 Dec. 24, she falls down the stairs at St. Joseph's and breaks her left arm, which is never set properly and leaves her incapacitated.
- 1578 July 23, Sega issues a counterbrief taking away Gracián's faculties as apostolic visitor.
 Aug. 9, the royal council forbids the discalced to obey Sega.
 Aug. 17–18, St. John of the Cross escapes from his prison in Toledo.

Oct. 9, the Teresian friars hold a chapter at Almodóvar, against Teresa's better judgment, and elect Antonio de Jesús superior.

Oct. 16, Segá annuls the chapter's decisions and places the Teresian friars and nuns under the authority of the provincials of the observant Carmelites.

Nov. 4, the prior general, Rubeo, dies.

(Don John of Austria dies and is succeeded by Alexander Farnese in the government of the Low Countries.)

1579 April 1, Segá and his counsellors deprive the provincials of authority over the Teresian friars and nuns and appoint Angel de Salazar as vicar general.

June, Teresa begins traveling once more: Medina, Valladolid, Salamanca, Alba, Avila, Toledo.

Nov. 24, arrives in Malagón and engages in speeding up the construction work on the new monastery.

Dec. 8, the nuns move to the new monastery, the only one constructed from its foundations according to Teresa's specifications.

(The Union of Utrecht forms the alliance of northern provinces of the Netherlands and makes protestantism the state religion.)

1580 February, the foundation in Villanueva de la Jara.

March, Teresa leaves Villanueva de la Jara and journeys to Toledo where she becomes seriously ill.

June, leaves Toledo for Segovia, passing through Madrid. Gracián and Diego de Yanguas, O.P., examine and "correct" *The Interior Castle* in the parlor of Segovia in the presence of Teresa.

June 22, the papal brief *Pia consideratione* allows the Teresian friars and nuns to form a separate province.

June 26, Teresa's brother Don Lorenzo dies.

Aug. 8, she arrives in Valladolid and becomes seriously ill.

Dec. 28, leaves Valladolid for Palencia and makes the foundation there the following day.

(King Henry of Portugal dies leaving no successor to the throne. Philip II to assert his rights to the crown orders the Duke of Alba to invade Portugal.)

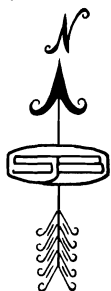
- 1581 March 3, opening of the chapter at Alcalá in view of which Teresa wrote letters to Gracián concerning legislation of the nuns.
 March 4, Gracián is elected provincial.
 June 30, the foundation in Soria.
 Sept. 10, María de Cristo renounces her office of prioress in Avila, and Teresa is elected.
 Nov. 28, St. John of the Cross arrives in Avila with the desire to persuade Teresa to come to Granada for a foundation there, but she declines.
 (Philip II is recognized as king of Portugal. Legazpi and Urdaneta found the city of Manila.)
- 1582 Jan. 2, Teresa leaves Avila for the last time on the way to the new foundation in Burgos.
 Jan. 20, the foundation in Granada is made by St. John of the Cross and Ana de Jesús.
 April 19, the foundation in Burgos is finally achieved.
 July 26, she leaves Burgos.
 Aug. 2, stops off in Palencia.
 Aug. 25, arrives in Valladolid.
 Sept. 15, leaves Valladolid and arrives in Medina.
 Sept. 19, leaves Medina and, at the order of Antonio de Jesús, goes to Alba de Tormes.
 Sept. 20, reaches Alba de Tormes at six in the evening.
 Sept. 29, goes to bed seriously ill never to get up again; announces that her death is at hand.
 Oct. 3, receives the sacraments of reconciliation and of the sick.
 Oct. 4, at nine in the evening dies "a daughter of the Church" at the age of sixty-seven.
 The Gregorian Calendar was introduced that year so that the day following Teresa's death became October 15.
- 1614 April 24, she is beatified by Paul V.
- 1622 March 12, she is canonized by Gregory XV along with Saints Isidore, Ignatius Loyola, Francis Xavier, and Philip Neri.
- 1970 Sept. 27, she is declared a Doctor of the Church by Paul VI, and becomes the first woman saint to be so recognized.



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TERESA'S FOUNDATIONS AND JOURNEYS

- 1567: Ávila, Arévalo, **MEDINA**, Madrid, Alcalá
- 1568: Alcalá, Madrid, Toledo, **MALAGON**, Toledo, Ávila, Duruelo, Alba, Medina, **VALLADOLID**
- 1569: Valladolid, Medina, Duruelo, Ávila, **TOLEDO**, Madrid, **PASTRANA**, Madrid, Toledo
- 1570: Toledo, Madrid, Pastrana, Madrid, Toledo, Ávila, **SALAMANCA**
- 1571: Salamanca, **ALBA**, Arévalo, Ávila, Medina, Arévalo, Avila
- 1572: . . .
- 1573: Ávila, Alba, Ávila, Salamanca
- 1574: Salamanca, Alba, Medina, Arévalo, **SEGOVIA**, Ávila, Valladolid
- 1575: Valladolid, Medina, Ávila, Toledo, Malagón, **BEAS**, Córdoba, **SEVILLE**
- 1576: Seville, Córdoba, Malagón, Toledo
- 1577: Toledo, Ávila
- 1578: . . .
- 1579: Ávila, Arévalo, Medina, Salamanca, Ávila, Toledo, Malagón
- 1580: Malagón, Toledo, **VILLANUEVA DE LA JARA**, Toledo, Segovia, Ávila, Arévalo, Medina, Valladolid, **PALENCIA**
- 1581: Palencia, Burgo de Osma, **SORIA**, Burgo de Osma, Segovia, Ávila
- 1582: Ávila, Arévalo, Medina, Valladolid, Palencia, **BURGOS**, Palencia, Valladolid, Medina, Alba

THE FOUNDATIONS

Prologue

JHS

1. Apart from what I have read in many places, I have seen through experience the great good that comes to a soul when it does not turn aside from obedience. It is through this practice that I think one advances in virtue and gains humility. In obedience lies security against that dread (which for us as mortals living in this life is a good thing) that we might stray from the path to heaven. Here one finds the quietude that is so precious in souls desiring to please God. For if they have truly resigned themselves through the practice of this holy obedience and surrendered the intellect to it, not desiring any other opinion than their confessor's (or, if they are religious, their superior's), the devil will cease attacking with his continual disturbances. He will have seen that he is losing rather than gaining. Also, those restless stirrings within us, which make us fond of doing our own will and which even subdue reason in matters concerning our own satisfaction, come to a stop. Those who practice obedience remember that they resolutely surrendered their own will to God's will, using submission to the one who stands in God's place as a means to this surrender.

Because His Majesty, in His goodness, has given me light to know the rich treasure contained in this precious virtue, I have striven—although weakly and imperfectly—to obtain it. Yet, often the small amount of virtue I see in myself contradicts what I just said. For with some things they command me to do I realize that such striving doesn't suffice. May the divine Majesty provide what is lacking for the accomplishment of this present task.

2. While in St. Joseph's in Avila in the year 1562, the same

year in which that monastery was founded, I was ordered by Fr. García de Toledo, a Dominican, who at the time was my confessor, to write of that monastery's foundation, along with many other things; whoever sees that work, if it is published, will learn there of those events.¹ Now here in Salamanca, in the year 1573, eleven years later, my confessor, a Father Rector from the Society, whose name is Maestro Ripaldo,² having seen this book of the first foundation, thought it would be of service to our Lord if I wrote about the other seven monasteries³ that were since founded through the goodness of the Lord, and also about the first monastery of the discalced Fathers of this ancient order.⁴ And so he commanded me to write this. It seems impossible for me to do so because I was so busy, both with correspondence and with other necessary occupations ordered by my superiors. I was recommending myself to God and somewhat distressed for being so useless and in such poor health. Even without this feeling of being useless, it often seemed to me because of my poor health and my lowly natural inclinations that I wouldn't be able to bear doing this work. While I was in this prayer, the Lord said to me: "Daughter, obedience gives strength."

3. May it please His Majesty that this be so, and may He grant me the grace to be able to recount for His glory the favors that through these foundations He has granted this order. One can be certain that this account will be given in all truthfulness, without any exaggeration, in so far as possible, but in conformity with what has taken place. For even in something of very little importance I wouldn't tell a lie for anything in the world. In this work that is being written for the praise of our Lord, any untruthfulness would cause me great scrupulosity. I believe that such a thing would involve not only a waste of time but deception concerning the works of God, and instead of being praised for them He would be offended. It would be a great betrayal. So that I might accomplish this task, may it please His Majesty not to let me out of His hand.

Each foundation will be expressly mentioned. And I will try to be brief, for my style is so heavy that although I may want to be brief, I fear that I will become tiresome and tire even myself. But because of the love my daughters have for me, they who will

possess this work after my days are done will be able to put up with the style.

4. I do not seek my own benefit in anything, nor do I have any reason to do so, but only His glory and praise, for many things will be seen for which glory and praise should be given Him. Thus may it please our Lord that anyone who reads this will not think of attributing praise to me, since to do so would be against the truth. Rather, let readers ask His Majesty to pardon me for the poor way in which I have benefited from all these favors. There is much greater reason for my daughters to complain about this defect than to thank me for what has been done through these favors. Let us, my daughters, give all our thanks to the divine goodness for the many favors He has granted us. I ask the reader to recite a Hail Mary out of love for Him that it may help me to leave purgatory and reach the vision of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever, amen.

5. Since I have a poor memory, I believe that many very important things will be left unsaid and that other things will be said that could be omitted. In sum, the work will be in accord with my lack of intelligence and culture and my lack also of the quiet necessary for writing. They also are ordering me, if the occasion offers itself, to deal with some things about prayer and how, by being deceived, those who practice it could be kept from making progress.

6. In all things I submit to what the holy Roman Church holds, with the resolve that before this work reaches your hands, my Sisters and daughters, learned and spiritual persons will see it. I begin in the name of the Lord, taking for my help His glorious Mother, whose habit I wear, although unworthily, and also my glorious father and lord, St. Joseph, in whose house I am, for he is the patron of this monastery of discalced nuns,⁵ through whose prayer I have been continually helped.

7. In the year 1573, feastday of St. Louis, king of France, which is August 24.⁶ May God be praised!

*Begins With the Foundation of the Carmel of
St. Joseph in Medina del Campo*

Chapter 1

On the circumstances surrounding the beginning of both this foundation and the others.

FROM WHAT I can understand now, the five years I spent in St. Joseph's in Avila after its foundation¹ seem to me to have been the most restful of my life, and my soul often misses that calm and quiet. During those years some young religious women entered, whom the world, apparently, had already held in its grasp as was manifested in their display of its elegant and fashionable dress. Drawing them quickly away from those vanities, the Lord brought them to His house, endowing them with so much perfection that it was to my embarrassment. He did this until the number reached thirteen, which had been set as the maximum number.²

2. It was a delight for me to be among souls so holy and pure, whose only concern was to serve and praise our Lord. His Majesty sent us what was necessary without our asking for it; and when we were in want, which was seldom, their joy was greater. I praised our Lord to see so many lofty virtues, especially the detachment they had from everything but serving Him. I, who was the superior there, never remember worrying about the necessities of life. I was convinced that the Lord would not fail those who had no other concern than to please Him. And if at times there wasn't enough food for everyone and I said that what there was should go to those most in need, each one thought that she could do without, and so the food remained until God sent enough for everyone.

3. With respect to the virtue of obedience, to which I am very devoted (although I didn't know how to practice it until those servants of God so taught me that I couldn't be ignorant as to whether or not I possessed it), I could mention many things that I saw there. One thing comes to mind now, and the incident

came about in the refectory one day when they served us helpings of cucumbers. My portion consisted of one that was very thin and rotten inside. Secretly, I called a Sister, one of those with greater intelligence and talents, to test her obedience and told her to go and plant the cucumber in a little vegetable garden we had. She asked me if she should plant it upright or sideways. I told her sideways. She went out and planted it, without the thought entering her mind that the cucumber would only dry up. Rather, since she planted it out of obedience, she blinded natural reason so as to believe that what she did was very appropriate.³

4. It occurred to me to charge one of them with six or seven contradictory duties. She undertook them, remaining silent, thinking it would be possible for her to do them all. There was a well with very bad water according to those who tried it, and it seemed impossible for the water to flow since the well was very deep. When I called some workmen to dig a new one, they laughed at me as though I were wanting to throw money away. I asked the Sisters what they thought. One said that it should be tried, that since our Lord would have to provide someone to bring us water as well as food, it would be cheaper for His Majesty to give us the well on the grounds of the house and that thus He would not fail to do so. Observing the great faith and determination with which she said it, I became certain. And, contrary to the opinion of the one who understood all about founts and water, I went ahead. And the Lord was pleased that we were able to put in a conduit which provided enough water for our needs, and for drinking, and which we now have.⁴

5. I do not present this as a miracle, for there are other things I could tell, but to show the faith these Sisters had since the things did happen in the way I tell them. Nor is it my first intention to praise the nuns of these monasteries, for through the goodness of the Lord, all of them act in this way. And of these things and many others one could write at length, and with benefit, for at times those who follow will be inspired to imitate these Sisters. But if the Lord should desire this to be known, the superiors will command the prioresses that they write of it.

6. Well now, this wretched one was among these angelic

souls. They didn't seem to me to be anything else, for there was no fault they hid from me, even if interior. And the favors, and ardent desires, and detachment the Lord gave them were great. Their consolation was their solitude. They assured me that they never tired of being alone, and thus they felt it a torment when others came to visit them, even if these were their brothers. The one who had the greater opportunity to remain in a hermitage considered herself the luckiest. In considering the real value of these souls and the courage God gave them to serve and suffer for Him, certainly not a characteristic of women, I often thought that the riches God placed in them were meant for some great purpose. What was later to come about never passed through my mind, because it didn't seem then to be something possible. There was no basis for even being able to imagine it, although my desires to be of some help to some soul as time went on had grown much greater. And I often felt like one who has a great treasure stored up and desires that all enjoy it, but whose hands are bound and unable to distribute it. So it seemed my soul was bound because the favors the Lord was granting it during those years were very great, and I thought that I was not putting them to good use. I tried to please the Lord with my poor prayers and always endeavored that the Sisters would do the same and dedicate themselves to the good of souls and the increase of His Church. Whoever conversed with them was always edified. And these were the things with which my great desires were fully taken up.

7. Four years later, or, I think, a little more than that, a Franciscan friar happened to come to see me, whose name was Fray Alonso Maldonado,⁵ a great servant of God, who had the same desires for the good of souls as I, but he was able to transfer them into deeds for which I envied him greatly. He had recently come back from the Indies. He began to tell me about the many millions of souls that were being lost there for want of Christian instruction, and before leaving he gave us a sermon, or conference, encouraging us to do penance. I was so grief-stricken over the loss of so many souls that I couldn't contain myself. I went to a hermitage⁶ with many tears. I cried out to the Lord, begging Him that He give me the means to be able to do something to

win some souls to His service, since the devil was carrying away so many, and that my prayer would do some good since I wasn't able to do anything else. I was very envious of those who for love of our Lord were able to be engaged in winning souls, though they might suffer a thousand deaths. And thus it happens to me that when we read in the lives of the saints that they converted souls, I feel much greater devotion, tenderness, and envy than over all the martyrdoms they suffered. This is the inclination the Lord has given me, for it seems to me that He prizes a soul that through our diligence and prayer we gain for Him, through His mercy, more than all the services we can render Him.

8. Well, going about with such great affliction, while I was in prayer one night, our Lord represented Himself to me in His usual way. He showed me much love, manifesting His desire to comfort me, and said: "Wait a little, daughter, and you will see great things."

These words remained so fixed in my heart that I could not forget them. No matter how much I thought about this promise I couldn't figure out how it would be possible, nor was there a way of even imagining how it could come about. Nonetheless, I remained very much consoled and certain that these words would prove true. But the means by which they eventually did never entered my mind. Thus another half year, I think, passed, and afterward there took place what I shall now describe.

Chapter 2

How our Father General came to Avila and what followed from his visit.

OUR GENERALS ALWAYS reside in Rome and none ever came to Spain.¹ So it seemed impossible that one should come now. But since nothing is impossible when our Lord wants it, His Majesty ordained that what had never happened before should come about now. When I came to know of it, I felt grieved. For as was already mentioned concerning the foundation of St. Joseph's, that house was not subject to the friars for the reason

given.² I feared two things: one, that our Father General would be displeased with me (and rightly so since he was unaware of how the things had come to pass); the other, that he would order me to return to the monastery of the Incarnation, where the mitigated rule is observed, which for me would have been an affliction for many reasons—there would be no point in going into them. One reason should be enough: that in the Incarnation I wouldn't be able to observe the austerity of the primitive rule, that the community numbers more than 150,³ and that where there are few there is more harmony and quiet. Our Lord did better than I had imagined. For the general is such a servant of the Lord, and so discreet and learned, that he regarded the work as good; moreover he showed no displeasure toward me. His name is Fray Juan Bautista Rubeo de Ravena, a person very distinguished in the order, and rightly so.⁴

2. Well then, when he arrived in Avila, I arranged that he come to St. Joseph's. And the bishop⁵ thought it well that he be given all the welcome that the bishop himself would receive. I gave our Father General an account in all truth and openness, for it is my inclination to speak thus with my superiors, whatever might happen, since they stand in the place of God—and with confessors, the same. If I didn't do this, it wouldn't seem to me that my soul was secure. And so I gave him an account of my soul and of almost my whole life, although it is very wretched. He consoled me much and assured me that he wouldn't order me to leave St. Joseph's.

3. He rejoiced to see our manner of life, a portrait, although an imperfect one, of the beginnings of our order, and how the primitive rule was being kept in all its rigor, for it wasn't being observed in any monastery in the entire order; only the mitigated rule was observed.⁶ And with the desire he had that this beginning go forward, he gave me very extensive patent letters, so that more monasteries could be founded, along with censures to prevent any provincial from restraining me.⁷ I did not ask for these, but he understood from my way of prayer that my desires to help some soul come closer to God were great.

4. I was not seeking these means; rather the thought seemed

to me foolish because a useless little woman as helpless as I well understood that she couldn't do anything. But when these desires come to a soul, it is not in its power to put them aside. Faith and the love of pleasing God make possible what to natural reason is not possible. And thus in seeing the strong desire of our Most Reverend General that more monasteries be founded, it seemed to me I saw them founded. Remembering the words our Lord had spoken to me,⁸ I now perceived some beginning to what before I could not understand. I was very sad to see our Father General return to Rome. I had grown to love him very much, and it seemed to me I was left helpless. He showed me the greatest kindness, and during the times that he was free from his duties he came to speak about spiritual things as one to whom the Lord must grant great favors. In this house it was a consolation for us to hear him. Moreover, before he went away, the bishop, Don Alvaro de Mendoza, very devoted to favoring those who aim after serving God with greater perfection, asked him permission for the foundation in his diocese of some monasteries of discalced friars of the primitive rule. Other persons also asked for this. Our Father General wanted to do so, but he found disagreement within the order. And thus, so as not to disturb the province, he let the matter go for then.

5. After some days passed, I was thinking about how necessary it would be if monasteries of nuns were to be founded that there be friars observing the same rule. Seeing how few friars there were in this province, making me even wonder whether or not they were going to die out, I prayed to the Lord over the matter very much and wrote to Father General. In the letter, I begged him for this permission as best I knew how, giving him the reasons why it would be a great service to God. I pointed out how the difficulties that could arise were not sufficient to set aside so good a work, and suggested to him what service it would render to our Lady, to whom he was very devoted. She must have been the one who arranged it. This letter reached him while he was in Valencia, and from there he sent me the permission for the foundation of two monasteries because he desired the best religious observance for the order.⁹ So that there wouldn't be any opposition, he made his permission subject to

the approval, difficult to obtain, of both the present and the former provincial. But since I saw that the main thing was accomplished, I had special hope the Lord would do the rest. And so it happened that through the kindness of the bishop, who took up this matter as his own, both provincials gave their permission.¹⁰

6. Well then, being consoled in having the permissions, my concern grew in that there was no friar in the province that I knew of who could begin this work, nor any layman who desired to make such a start. I didn't do anything but beg our Lord that he would awaken at least one person. Neither did I have a house or the means to get one. Here I was, a poor discalced nun, without help from anywhere—only from the Lord—weighed down with patent letters and good desires, and without there being any possibility of my getting the work started. Neither courage nor hope failed, for since the Lord had given the one thing, He would give the other. Everything now seemed very possible, and so I set to work.

7. O greatness of God! How You manifest Your power in giving courage to an ant! How true, my Lord, that it is not because of You that those who love You fail to do great works but because of our own cowardice and pusillanimity. Since we are never determined, but full of human prudence and a thousand fears, You, consequently, my God, do not do your marvelous and great works. Who is more fond than You of giving, or of serving even at a cost to Yourself, when there is someone open to receive? May it please Your Majesty that I render You some service and that I not have to render an accounting for all that I have received, amen.

Chapter 3

The circumstances surrounding the foundation of the monastery of St. Joseph in Medina del Campo.

WHILE I WAS HAVING ALL these concerns, the thought came to me to ask help from the Fathers of the Society, for they were well accepted in that place, that is, in Medina. As I have

written in my account of the first foundation, they guided my soul for many years. I always feel especially devoted to them because of the great good they did for it.¹ I wrote to the rector in Medina about what our Father General had ordered me to do. The rector happened to be the one who had been my confessor for many years, whom I mentioned, although I did not give his name. His name is Baltasar Alvarez, and at present he is provincial.² He and the others said they would do what they could about the matter. They thus did a great deal to secure permission from the people and the bishop,³ for since the monastery is to be founded in poverty, permission is everywhere difficult to obtain. So there was a delay of several days in the negotiations.

2. A priest went there to attend to these negotiations. He was a good servant of God, very detached from all worldly things and much dedicated to prayer. He was the chaplain in the monastery where I lived. The Lord gave him the same desires that He gave me, and so I was helped very much by him, as will be seen further on. His name is Julián de Avila.⁴

Well, now that I had the permission, I didn't have a house or a penny to buy one with. Furthermore, how could a poor wanderer like myself get credit for a loan unless the Lord would give it? The Lord provided that a very virtuous young lady, who because of lack of room could not enter St. Joseph's, heard that another house was being founded and came to ask if I would accept her in the new one. She had some money which was very little and not enough to buy a house but enough to rent one and to help with the travel expenses.⁵ And so we found one to rent. Without any more support than this and with our Father Chaplain, Julián de Avila, we left Avila. Besides myself, there were two nuns from St. Joseph's and four from the Incarnation, the monastery of the mitigated rule where I stayed before St. Joseph's was founded.⁶

3. When our intention became known in the city, there was much criticism. Some were saying I was crazy; others were hoping for an end to that nonsense. To the bishop—according to what he told me later—the idea seemed very foolish. But he didn't then let me know this; neither did he hinder me, for he loved me much and didn't want to hurt me. My friends said a

great deal against the project. But I didn't pay much attention to them. For that which to them seemed doubtful, to me seemed so easy that I couldn't persuade myself that it would fail to be a true success.

Before we left Avila, I wrote to a Father of our order, Fray Antonio de Heredia,⁷ asking him to buy me a house, for he was then prior at St. Anne's, the monastery of friars of our order in Medina. He spoke of the matter to a lady who was devoted to him,⁸ for she had a house that had completely collapsed except for one room. The house was situated in a fine location. She was so good she promised to sell the house and so they came to an agreement without her asking for any surety or binding force other than his word. If she had asked for any, we would have had no resources. The Lord was arranging everything. This house was so tumble-down that we had rented another to live in while it was being repaired, for there was much to do on it.

4. Well, on the first day, as nightfall was approaching and we were entering Arévalo and tired because of our bad provisions for traveling, a priest friend of ours who had lodging for us in the home of some devout women came out to meet us. He told me in secret that we didn't have a house because the one rented was near a monastery of Augustinian friars who resisted our coming and that a lawsuit would be unavoidable.⁹ Oh, God help me! When You, Lord, want to give courage, how little do all contradictions matter! Rather, it seems I am encouraged by them, thinking that since the devil is beginning to be disturbed the Lord will be served in that monastery. Nonetheless, I told the priest to be quiet about it so as not to disturb my companions; especially two of them from the Incarnation, for the others would suffer any trial for me. One of these two was then subprioress there,¹⁰ and the two did much to impede the departure. They were both from good families and were coming against their will because what we were doing seemed absurd to everyone. Afterward I saw that they were more than right. For when the Lord is pleased that I found one of these houses, it seems that until after the foundation is made my mind doesn't admit any reason that would seem sufficient to set the work aside. After the deed is done, all the difficulties come before me together, as will be seen later.

5. When we reached our lodging place, I learned that in the town was a Dominican friar, a very great servant of God, to whom I had confessed during the time that I was in St. Joseph's. Because in writing of that foundation I spoke much about his virtue, I will mention here no more than his name, Fray Maestro Domingo Báñez.¹¹ He is very learned and discreet. By his opinion I was guided, and in his opinion the foundation was not as troublesome as it seemed to others. The person who knows God better does God's work more easily. And from some of the favors that he knew His Majesty granted me and from what he had seen in the foundation of St. Joseph's, everything seemed to him to be very possible. It was a great consolation to me when I saw him, for with his favorable opinion it seemed to me everything would turn out all right. Well, when he came to see me, I told him in strict secrecy of my plan. To him it seemed that we could bring the matter with the Augustinians to a quick conclusion. But any delay was hard for me to bear because I didn't know what to do with so many nuns. And thus, because inside the lodging place the nuns had been told of the situation, we all passed the night with much apprehension.

6. The first thing in the morning the prior of our order, Fray Antonio, arrived and said that the house he had made an agreement to buy was adequate and had an entrance way which if adorned with some hangings could be made into a little church. We decided to move into that house. At least to me the idea seemed very good, for whatever could be done more quickly is what suited us best since we were outside our monasteries. And also I feared some opposition, since I learned through experience from the first foundation. Thus I desired that we take possession of the house before our intentions be made known, and so we determined to do this at once. Our Father Master Fray Domingo, agreed.

7. We arrived in Medina del Campo on the eve of our Lady's feast in August at twelve midnight. We dismounted at the monastery of St. Anne's so as not to make noise and proceeded to the house on foot. It was by the great mercy of God that we were not struck by any of the bulls being corralled at that hour for the next day's run. We were so engrossed in what we were doing that

we didn't pay any attention. However, the Lord, who always takes care of those who seek to serve Him (and indeed, that's what we were trying to do), kept us from being harmed.

8. When we arrived at the house, we entered the courtyard. The walls looked to me to be quite dilapidated, but not as dilapidated as they looked when daylight came. It seems the Lord wanted that blessed Father to be blinded and thus unable to see that the place was not suitable for the Blessed Sacrament. When we saw the entrance way, it was necessary to clear away the dirt since overhead was nothing but a rustic roof of bare tile. Because the walls were not plastered, the night almost over, and all we had were some blankets—I believe there were three—which for the whole length of the entrance way were nothing, I didn't know what to do. For I saw that the place wasn't suitable for an altar. It pleased the Lord, who wanted the place to be prepared immediately, that the butler of that lady who was the owner had at her house many tapestries belonging to her and a blue damask bed-hanging; and the lady had told him to give us whatever we wanted, for she was very good.

9. When I saw such nice furnishings, I praised the Lord, and so did the others—although we didn't know what to do for nails, nor was it the hour for buying them. We began to look in the walls. Finally, through much effort, a supply was found. With some of the men hanging the tapestries, and we cleaning the floor, we worked so quickly that when dawn came the altar was set up, and the little bell placed in a corridor; and immediately Mass was said. Having Mass was sufficient in order to take possession. But not knowing this, we reserved the Blessed Sacrament,¹² and through some cracks in the door that was in front of us, we attended the Mass, for there was no place else for us to do so.

10. Up to this point I was very happy because for me it is the greatest consolation to see one church more where the Blessed Sacrament is preserved. But my happiness did not last long. For when Mass was finished I went to look a little bit through a window at the courtyard, and I saw that all the walls in some places had fallen to the ground and that many days would be required to repair them. Oh, God help me! When I saw His Majesty placed in the street, at a time so dangerous, on account of those Luther-

ans,¹³ as this time in which we now live, what anguish came to my heart!

11. To this anguish were joined all the difficulties that those who had strongly criticized the project could bring up. I understood clearly that those persons were right. It seemed impossible for me to go ahead with what had been begun. Just as previously everything seemed easy to me when I reflected that I was doing it for God, so now my temptation constricted the Lord's power to such an extent that it didn't seem I had received any favor from Him. Only my lowliness and my powerlessness did I have before me. Well now, supported by something so miserable, what success could I hope for? Had I been alone, I think I could have suffered the situation. But to think that my companions, after the opposition with which they had left, had to return to their houses was a painful thing to bear. Also, it seemed to me that since this first attempt had gone wrong, everything that I had understood I must do for the Lord in the future would not come about. Then, in addition, came the fear concerning whether or not what I understood in prayer was an illusion. This latter was not the least suffering but the greatest, for I had the strongest fear of being deceived by the devil.

O my God, what a thing it is to see a soul when You desire to abandon it to suffering! Indeed, when I recall this affliction and some others that I have had in the course of making these foundations, it doesn't seem to me that bodily trials, even though great, are anything in comparison.

12. With all this anguish that kept me truly depressed, I didn't let my companions know anything because I didn't want to cause them more distress than they already had. I suffered with this trial until evening, for then the rector of the Society sent a Father to see me who greatly encouraged and comforted me. I didn't tell him all my sufferings but only those which I felt at seeing us on the street. I began to speak of his finding us a house to rent, cost what it would cost, so that we could move to another one while this one was being repaired. And I began to console myself in seeing the many people who came, and that none of them had any thought that what we did was foolish, which was mercy from God, for it would have been very right if

the Blessed Sacrament had been taken away from us. Now I think back on my foolishness and how no one thought of consuming the Eucharist, though it seemed to me that if it had been consumed, everything would have been undone.

13. Despite our great efforts, no house for rent was found in the whole area. This made me suffer through very painful nights and days. Even though I put some men in charge of always keeping watch over the Blessed Sacrament, I was worried that they might fall asleep. So I arose during the night to watch it through a window, for the moon was very bright and I could easily see it. Many people came during all those days, and not only did they fail to perceive this as wrong but they were stirred to devotion to see our Lord once again in the stable. And His Majesty, as one who never tires of humiliating Himself for us, didn't seem to want to leave it.

14. After eight days had passed, a merchant who lived in a very nice house,¹⁴ told us when he saw our need that we could live on the upper floor of his house and stay there as though in our own. It had a large gilded room that he gave us for a church. And a lady who lived next to the house that we bought, whose name was Doña Elena de Quiroga, a great servant of God, told me she would help so that construction of a chapel for the Blessed Sacrament could be immediately started, and also accommodations made so that we could observe the rule of enclosure. Others gave us many alms for food, but this lady was the one who aided me most.¹⁵

15. Now with this I began to calm down because we were able to keep strict enclosure, and we began to recite the Hours. The good prior hurried very much with the repair of the house, and he suffered many trials. Nonetheless, the work took two months. But the house was repaired in such a way that we were able to live there in a reasonably good manner for several years. Afterward, our Lord continued bringing about improvements for it.

16. While in Medina, I was still concerned about the monasteries for friars, and since I didn't have any, as I said,¹⁶ I didn't know what to do. So I decided to speak about the matter very confidentially with the prior there¹⁷ to see what he would

counsel me, and this I did. He was happy to know of it and promised me he would be the first. I took it that he was joking with me and told him so. For although he was always a good friar, recollected, very studious, and fond of his cell—in fact, he was a learned man—it didn't seem to me he was the one for a beginning like this. Neither would he have the courage or promote the austerity that was necessary, since he was fragile and not given to austerity. He assured me very much and asserted that for many days the Lord had been calling him to a stricter life. Thus he had already decided to go to the Carthusians, and they had already told him they would accept him. Despite all this, I was not completely satisfied. Although I was happy to hear what he said, I asked that we put it off for a while and that he prepare by putting into practice the things he would be promising. And this he did, for a year passed and during that year so many trials and persecutions from many false accusations came upon him that it seems the Lord wanted to test him. He bore it all so well and was making such progress that I praised our Lord, and it seemed to me His Majesty was preparing him for the new foundation.

17. A little later it happened that a young Father came there who was studying at Salamanca. He came along with another, as his companion, who told me great things about the life this Father was leading. The young Father's name was Fray John of the Cross.¹⁸ I praised our Lord. And when I spoke with this young friar, he pleased me very much. I learned from him how he also wanted to go to the Carthusians. Telling him what I was attempting to do, I begged him to wait until the Lord would give us a monastery and pointed out the great good that would be accomplished if in his desire to improve he were to remain in his own order and that much greater service would be rendered to the Lord. He promised me he would remain as long as he wouldn't have to wait long. When I saw that I already had two friars to begin with, it seemed to me the matter was taken care of; although I still wasn't so satisfied with the prior, and thus I waited a while, and waited also for the sake of finding a place where they could begin.

18. The nuns were gaining esteem in the town and receiving

much affection. In my opinion, rightly so, for they were not interested in anything else than how each one could serve our Lord more. In all matters they lived the same way as at St. Joseph's in Avila since the rule and constitutions were the same.

The Lord began to call some women to receive the habit, and the favors He gave them were so great that I was amazed. May He be ever blessed, amen. In order to love, it doesn't seem that He waits for anything else than to be loved.

Chapter 4

*Treats of some favors the Lord grants to the nuns of these monasteries and gives counsel to the prioresses about the attitude one should have toward these nuns.*¹

SINCE I DO NOT KNOW how much time on this earth the Lord will still give me, or how much opportunity to write, and since now it seems I have a little time, I thought that before I go further I should give some counsels to prioresses. Through these, the prioresses will learn both to understand themselves and to guide their subjects so that the souls of these latter will receive greater benefit, even though with less satisfaction.

It should be noted that, when they ordered me to write about these foundations, seven monasteries (leaving aside the first one, St. Joseph's in Avila, of which I wrote at that time) had been founded by the Lord's favor. This takes us up to the foundation of Alba de Tormes, which is the last of them. The reason that more have not been established is that my superiors have tied me down to something else, as will be seen later.²

2. Well, in observing what has been happening spiritually during these years in these monasteries, I have seen the need for what I want to say. May it please our Lord that I may manage to do so in accordance with what I see is necessary. If the spiritual experiences are not counterfeit, it's necessary that souls not be frightened. For as I have mentioned in other places, in some little things I've written for the Sisters,³ if we proceed with a pure conscience and obediently, the Lord will never permit the devil

to have enough influence to deceive harmfully our souls; on the contrary, the devil himself is the one who is left deceived. And since he knows this, I don't believe he does as much harm as our imagination and bad humors do, especially if there is melancholy; for the nature of women is weak, and the self-love that reigns in us is very subtle. Thus many persons have come to me, both men and women, together with the nuns of these houses, who I have clearly discerned were often deceiving themselves without wanting to do so. I really believe that the devil must be meddling so as to trick us. But I have seen very many, as I say, whom the Lord in His goodness has not let out of His hand. Perhaps He wants to exercise them through these deceptions they undergo so that they might gain experience.

3. Things pertaining to prayer and perfection are, because of our own sins, so discredited in the world that it's necessary for me to explain myself the way I do. If even without seeing danger people fear to walk this path of prayer, what would happen if we mentioned some of the danger? Although, truthfully, there is danger in everything, and, while we live, we have to proceed with fear and ask the Lord to teach us and not abandon us. But, as I believe I once said,⁴ if some danger can be lacking, there is much less of it for those who turn their thoughts more to God and strive for perfection in their lives.

4. Since, my Lord, we see that You often free us from the dangers in which we place ourselves, even in opposition to You, how can one believe that You will fail to free us when we aim after nothing more than to please You and delight in You? Never can I believe this! It could be that because of other secret judgments God might permit some things that must happen anyway. But good never brought about evil. Thus, may what I have said help us strive to walk better along the road so as to please our Spouse more and find Him sooner, but not make us abandon it; and encourage us to walk with fortitude along a road that has such rugged mountain passes, as does that of this life, but not intimidate us from walking through them. For, in the final analysis, by proceeding with humility, through the mercy of God, we will reach that city of Jerusalem, where all that has been suffered will be little, or nothing, in comparison with what is enjoyed.

5. Well, as these little dove-cotes of the Virgin, our Lady, were beginning to be inhabited, the divine Majesty began to show His greatness in these weak little women, who were strong though in their desires and their detachment from every creature. When practiced with a pure conscience, such detachment must be what most joins the soul to God. There is no need to point this out because if the detachment is true it seems to me impossible that one offend the Lord. Since in all their dealings and conversations these nuns are concerned with Him, His Majesty doesn't seem to want to leave them. This is what I see now and in truth can say. Let those fear who are to come and who will read this. And if they do not see what is now seen, let them not blame the times, for it is always a suitable time for God to grant great favors to the one who truly serves Him. And let them strive to discern whether there is some failure in this detachment and correct it.

6. I sometimes hear it said about the first members of religious orders that since they were the foundation the Lord granted them greater favors as He did to our holy forebears; and this is true. But we must always observe that they are the foundation for those who are to come. If we who live now had not fallen from where our forebears were, and those who come after us would live as they did, the edifice would always be firm. What does it profit me that our forebears had been so holy if I afterward am so wretched that I leave the edifice damaged through bad customs? For it is clear that those who come will not so much remember those who lived many years ago as those they see before them. It would be rather amusing were I to make the excuse that I am not one of the first members and at the same time fail to recognize the difference lying between my life and virtue and that of those to whom God granted such great favors.

7. Oh, God help me! What twisted excuses and what obvious deceit! I regret, my God, to be so wretched and so useless in your service; but I know well that the fault lies within me that You do not grant me the favors You did to my forebears. I grieve over my life, Lord, when I compare it with theirs, and I cannot say this without tears. I see that I have lost what they have worked

for and that I can in no way blame You. Nor is it in any way good for persons to complain if they see their order in some decline; rather, they should strive to be the kind of rock on which the edifice may again be raised, for the Lord will help toward that.⁵

8. Well to return to what I was saying,⁶ for I have digressed a great deal, the favors the Lord grants in these houses are so many that if there are one or two in each that God leads now by meditation all the rest reach perfect contemplation. Some are so advanced that they attain to rapture. To others the Lord grants a favor of another kind, giving them, along with rapture, revelations and visions that one clearly understands to be from God. There is no house now that does not have one, two, or three who receive this latter favor. Well do I understand that sanctity does not lie in these favors, nor is it my intention to praise only them but to make it understood that the counsels I want to give have a purpose.

Chapter 5

Gives some counsels on matters concerning prayer. This chapter is very beneficial for those engaged in active works.

IT IS NOT MY INTENTION or thought that what I say here be taken for certain and as an infallible rule, for that would be foolish in things so difficult. Since there are many paths along this way of the spirit, it could be that I will manage to say certain useful things about some of them. If those who do not walk along the path of which I'm speaking do not understand what I'm saying, it will be because they are walking by another. And if I do not help anyone, the Lord will accept my desire. He knows that even though I have not experienced all of which I speak, I have seen it in other souls.

2. First, I want to treat, according to my poor understanding, of the substance of perfect prayer. For I have run into some for whom it seems the whole business lies in thinking. If they can keep their mind much occupied in God, even though great ef-

fort is exerted, they at once think they are spiritual. If, on the contrary, without being able to avoid it, they become distracted, even if for the sake of good things, they then become disconsolate and think they are lost. Learned men will not fall victim to these misconceptions, although I have already met learned men who have had some of them. But it is fitting that we women receive advice with regard to all these misunderstandings. I do not deny that it is a favor from the Lord if someone is able to be always meditating on His works, and it is good that one strive to do so. However, it must be understood that not all imaginations are by their nature capable of this meditating, but all souls are capable of loving. I have already at another time written about the causes of this restlessness of our imagination, I think;¹ not all the causes—that would be impossible—but some. And so I am not treating of this now. But I should like to explain that the soul is not the mind, nor is the will directed by thinking, for this would be very unfortunate. Hence, the soul's progress does not lie in thinking much but in loving much.

3. How does one acquire this love? By being determined to work and to suffer, and to do so when the occasion arises. It is indeed true that by thinking of what we owe the Lord, of who He is, and what we are, a soul's determination grows, and that this thinking is very meritorious and appropriate for beginners. But it must be understood that this is true provided that nothing interferes with obedience or benefit to one's neighbor. When either of these two things presents itself, time is demanded, and also the abandonment of what we so much desire to give God, which, in our opinion, is to be alone thinking of Him and delighting in the delights that He gives us. To leave aside these delights for either of these other two things is to give delight to Him and do the work for Him, as He Himself said: *What you did for one of these little ones you did for Me.*² And in matters touching on obedience He doesn't want the soul who truly loves Him to take any other path than the one He did: *obediens usque ad mortem.*³

4. Well if this is true, from where does the displeasure proceed which for the greater part is felt when one has not spent a

large part of the day very much withdrawn and absorbed in God, even though we are occupied with these other things? In my opinion, there are two reasons for this displeasure: The first and main one⁴ is the very subtle self-love that is mixed in here. This self-love does not allow one to understand what it is to want to please ourselves rather than God. For, clearly, after a soul begins to taste how sweet the Lord is,⁵ it is more pleasing for the body to be resting without work and for the soul to be receiving delight.

5. O charity of those who truly love this Lord and know their own nature! How little rest they can have if they see they may play a little part in getting even one soul to make progress and to love God more, or in consoling it, or in taking away some danger from it. How poorly would it then rest with this particular rest of its own! And when it cannot help with deeds, it will do so with prayer, begging the Lord for the many souls that it is sad to see being lost. The soul loses its delight and counts the loss as gain, for it doesn't think about its own satisfaction but rather about how it can best do the Lord's will, and this it does through obedience. It would be a distressing thing if God were clearly telling us to go after something that matters to Him and we would not want to do so but want to remain looking at Him because that is more pleasing to us. What an amusing kind of progress in the love of God it is, to tie His hands by thinking that He cannot help us except by one path!

6. I know personally some individuals (leaving aside, as I have said,⁶ what I have experienced) who brought me to understand this truth when I was greatly distressed to see myself with so little time. And I thus was sorry for them to see they were so occupied with so many business matters and things that obedience commanded them. I was thinking to myself, and even said so, that it wasn't possible in the midst of such commotion for the spirit to grow, for at that time they didn't have much spirit. O Lord, how different are your paths from our clumsy imaginings! And how from a soul that is already determined to love You and is abandoned into Your hands, You do not want anything but that it obey, that it inquire well into what is for Your greater service, and that it desire this! There's no need for it to be seeking

out paths or choosing them, for its will is Yours. You, my Lord, take up this care of guiding it to where it receives the most benefit. The prelate who is the superior may not be concerned for what benefits the soul but concerned only that the business he thinks is fitting for the community be attended to. Yet, You, my God, do have concern and go about disposing the soul and the things with which it is dealing in such a way that, without understanding how, we find in ourselves spiritual improvement, so great that we are afterward left amazed.

7. There was a person to whom I spoke a few days ago who for about fifteen years was kept so busy through obedience with work in occupations and government that in all those years he didn't remember having had one day for himself, although he tried the best he could to keep a pure conscience and have some periods each day for prayer. His soul in its inclination is one of the most obedient I have seen, and so he communicates this spirit of obedience to all those with whom he deals. The Lord has repaid him well; for he has found that he has, without knowing how, that same precious and desirable liberty of spirit that the perfect have. In it, they find all the happiness that could be wanted in this life, for in desiring nothing they possess all. Nothing on earth do they fear or desire, neither do trials disturb them, nor do consolations move them. In sum, nothing can take away their peace because these souls depend only on God. And since no one can take Him away from them, only the fear of losing Him can cause them pain. Everything else in this world, in their opinion, is as though it were not; it neither contributes anything nor removes anything from their happiness. Oh, happy obedience and happy the resulting distraction that could obtain so much!

8. This is not the only person, for I have known others of the same sort, whom I had not seen for some, or many, years. In asking them about how they had spent these years, I learned that the years were all spent in the fulfillment of the duties of obedience and charity. On the other hand, I saw such improvement in spiritual things that I was amazed. Well, come now, my daughters, don't be sad when obedience draws you to involvement in exterior matters. Know that if it is in the kitchen, the

Lord walks among the pots and pans helping you both interiorly and exteriorly.

9. I remember that I met a religious who had resolved and become very determined never to say “no” to anything his superior commanded no matter how much labor it would cost him. One day he was completely worn out from work; and when it was already late and he could no longer stay on his feet and went to sit down and rest a little, the superior met him and told him to take the hoe and go dig in the garden. He remained silent; although in his human nature he was indeed afflicted, for he couldn’t help it. He took his hoe and when he was about to enter a passageway into the garden (I saw the spot many years after he told me of this, for I managed to found a house in that place), our Lord appeared to him weighed down with the cross, so tired and worn that this religious understood clearly that what he himself was enduring was nothing when compared with what the Lord endured.

10. I believe that, since the devil sees there is no path that leads more quickly to the highest perfection than obedience, he sets up many annoyances and difficulties under the color of good. Note this well and you will see clearly that I am speaking the truth. The highest perfection obviously does not consist in interior delights or in great raptures or in visions or in the spirit of prophecy but in having our will so much in conformity with God’s will that there is nothing we know He wills that we do not want with all our desire, and in accepting the bitter as happily as we do the delightful when we know that His Majesty desires it. This seems most difficult (not the doing of it, but this being content with what completely contradicts our nature); and indeed it truly is difficult. But love has this strength if it is perfect, for we forget about pleasing ourselves in order to please the one we love. And truly this is so; for even though the trials may be very great, they become sweet when we know we are pleasing God. And this is the way by which those who have reached this stage love persecutions, dishonor, and offenses. This is so certain, so well known, and so plain that there is no reason for me to delay over the matter.

11. What I intend to explain is why obedience, in my opin-

ion, is the quickest or best means for reaching this most happy state. The reason is that since we are by no means lords of our own will in such a way that we can employ it purely and simply in God, obedience is the true path for subjecting it to reason. For this subjection is not accomplished by means of good reasons; human nature and self-love can find so many of them that we would never arrive at the goal. And often the most reasonable thing seems to us foolish if it is not to our advantage.

12. So much could be said here that we would never finish dealing with this interior battle and all that the devil, the world, and our own sensuality do to make us twist reason.

Well, what is the remedy? That in obedience, just as in a very dubious litigation, a judge is accepted and both sides place the matter in his hands. Tired of arguing, our soul accepts one who may be either the superior or the confessor with the determination not to have any more argument or to think any more of its own case but to trust the words of the Lord who says, *Whoever hears you hears Me*,⁷ and it disregards its own will. The Lord esteems this surrender very much, and rightly so, because it means making Him Lord over the free will He has given us. By exercising ourselves in this surrender, sometimes denying ourselves, at other times waging a thousand battles since the judgment made in our case seems to us absurd, we come to be conformed with what they command us. It can be a painful exercise, but with or without the pain we in the end do what is commanded, and the Lord helps so much on His part that for the same reason that we subject our will and reason to Him He makes us lords over our will. Then, being lords of ourselves, we can with perfection be occupied with God, giving Him a pure will that He may join it with His, asking Him to send fire from heaven so that His love may burn this sacrifice⁸ and take away everything that could displease him. We have done what we can by placing the sacrifice on the altar, although through much hardship. And, insofar as is in our power, the sacrifice remains on the altar and does not touch the ground.

13. Clearly, no one can give what he does not have; he must have it first. Well, believe me that in order to acquire this treasure there is no better way than to dig and toil in order to exca-

vate from this mine of obedience. The more we dig the more we shall find; and the more we submit to men, having no other will than that of our superiors, the more we shall be lords over our will so as to bring it into conformity with God's will.

Observe, Sisters, whether leaving the pleasure of solitude is not well repaid. I tell you that it is not because of a lack of solitude that you will fail to dispose yourselves to reach this true union that was mentioned, that is, to make your will one with God's. This is the union that I desire and would want for all of you, and not some absorptions, however delightful they may be, that have been given the name "union." The absorption will be genuine union if afterward there is present the union just explained. But if after this suspension not much obedience remains, and self-will is present, it seems to me the soul will be united with its self-love rather than with the will of God. May His Majesty be pleased that I act in accordance with what I understand.

14. The second reason,⁹ it seems to me, for this displeasure is that since in solitude there are fewer occasions to offend the Lord (for some cannot be lacking because the devils and we ourselves are present everywhere), it seems the soul in its journey is freer from stain. For if it is fearful of offending Him, it finds the greatest consolation in not having anything to make it stumble. And certainly this seems to me reason enough for desiring not to have conversation with anyone unless it's about God's great favors and delights.

15. Here, my daughters, is where love will be seen: not hidden in corners but in the midst of the occasions of falling.¹⁰ And believe me that even though there may be more faults, and even some slight losses, our gain will be incomparably greater. Note that I am always presupposing that these things are done out of obedience or charity. For if these latter are not factors, I always repeat that solitude is better, and even that we must desire it. We must desire solitude even when involved in the things I'm speaking of; indeed, this desire is continually present in souls that truly love God. As for my saying that leaving solitude is a gain, I say this because doing so makes us realize who we are and the degree of virtue we have. For people who are always recol-

lected in solitude, however holy in their own opinion they may be, don't know whether they are patient or humble, nor do they have the means of knowing this. How could it be known whether a man were valiant if he were not seen in battle? St. Peter thought he was very courageous; see how he acted when the occasion presented itself.¹¹ But he came through that experience not trusting at all in himself, and as a result he trusted in God and subsequently suffered the martyrdom about which we know.¹²

16. Oh, God help me, if only we understood how great our misery is! In everything there is danger if we do not understand this misery. For that reason it is a great good for us if we are ordered to do things that show us our own lowliness. I consider one day of humble self-knowledge a greater favor from the Lord, even though the day may have cost us numerous afflictions and trials, than many days of prayer. Moreover, the true lover loves everywhere and is always thinking of the Beloved! It would be a thing hard to bear if we were able to pray only when off in some corner. I do realize that prayer in the midst of occupations cannot last many hours; but, O my Lord, what power over You a sigh of sorrow has that comes from the depths of our heart on seeing that it isn't enough that we are in this exile but that we are not even given the chance to be alone enjoying You.

17. Here we see clearly that we are His slaves, our wills being sold, out of love for Him, through the virtue of obedience, since through obedience we in some way give up enjoying God Himself. And yet, this is nothing if we consider that He came from the bosom of His Father out of obedience to become our slave. Well, how can one repay this favor or what service render for it? It's necessary to be on one's guard and careful in the performance of good works by having frequent interior recourse to God, even though these works are done in obedience and charity. And let souls believe me that it is not the length of time spent in prayer that benefits one; when the time is spent as well in good works, it is a great help in preparing the soul for the enkindling of love. The soul may thereby be better prepared in a very short time than through many hours of reflection. All must come from His hand. May He be blessed forever.

Chapter 6

*Warns about the harm that can be done to spiritual people if they do not understand when the spirit must be resisted. Treats of the soul's desires to receive Communion and of the delusion that can be present in such desires. There are important things here for those who govern these houses.*¹

I HAVE DILIGENTLY TRIED to understand the origin of a great absorption I have seen in some persons whom the Lord favors much in prayer and who do their best to prepare themselves to receive these gifts. I am not dealing now with the soul's suspension or rapture given by His Majesty, for I have written much about this in other places.² In a matter like rapture there is nothing to speak of because if it is genuine we cannot do anything ourselves to prevent it, however much we try. It must be noted that in rapture the power that takes away our power to be in control of ourselves lasts but a short while. But frequently it happens that there begins a kind of prayer of quiet, something that resembles spiritual sleep, that so absorbs the soul that if we do not understand how one is to proceed therein much time could be lost and our strength diminished through our own fault and with little merit.

2. I would like to know how to explain myself here; it is so difficult that I don't know if I'll succeed. But I do know well that, if they want to believe me, souls who may be proceeding under this misconception will understand. I know some souls of great virtue who remained for seven or eight hours in absorption; everything seemed to them to be rapture. Any virtuous exercise so laid hold of them that they soon abandoned themselves to the absorption,³ thinking it was not good to resist the Lord. Little by little such persons can die or become fools if they do not seek a remedy. What I understand about this occurrence is that since the Lord begins to give delight, and our nature is very fond of delight, the soul becomes so occupied in the pleasure that it does not want to stir or lose that experience for anything. Indeed, the pleasure is greater than any of the world's pleasures. And when the experience takes place in a weak nature, or comes

from one's own natural inventiveness (or better, imagination), nature will make souls know a thousand delightful lies. In this absorption the imagination does not wander but in apprehending one thing concentrates on it without distraction. Many persons when they begin to think about something, even though the matter may not concern God, are left absorbed or looking at it without adverting to what they are gazing on. They are like people who are slow and who seem, through indolence, to forget what they are about to say. This is what happens in these cases in conformity with the person's nature, or bodily humors, or weakness, or if the individual suffers melancholy; these people end up believing a thousand pleasant lies.

3. A little further on I shall speak of melancholy,⁴ but even if this humor is not present, that which I have mentioned⁵ happens. And it also happens to persons who are worn out through penance. As I have said,⁶ when love begins to give pleasure to the senses these persons allow themselves to be carried away by it. In my opinion their love would be much better if they did not allow themselves to remain in stupefaction, for in this condition of prayer one can easily resist. For just as a person will faint from weakness and be unable to speak or stir, so this is what happens here; for the strength of the spirit lays hold of nature, when this latter is weak, and subjects it.

4. You could ask me what difference there is between this absorption and rapture since the two are the same, at least in appearance—and you would be right as regards appearance but not as regards reality. For in rapture, or union of all the faculties, as I say, the duration is short, and great effects, interior light, and many other benefits are given, and the intellect doesn't work; it is the Lord who works in the will. In the absorption, things are very different, for although the body is captive, the will is not, nor is the memory or the intellect. But these faculties carry on their delirious activity, and if they rest in something they will perhaps go back and forth over it with ifs and buts.

5. I find no benefit in this bodily weakness—for it is nothing else—except that it arises from a good source. It would be a greater help to use this time well than to remain in this absorption so long. Much more can be merited by making an act of love

and by often awakening the will to greater love of God than by leaving it listless. So I counsel the prioresses to make every possible effort to prevent the nuns from spending long periods in this daze. For to remain in such an absorption is nothing else, in my opinion, than to allow the faculties and senses to become crippled and not carry out what the soul commands them. Thus they deprive the soul of the gain that they usually get for it by proceeding carefully. If the absorption is understood to be caused by weakness, take away the fasts and disciplines (I mean those that are not obligatory, and in time it could happen that all of them in good conscience may be taken away), and give these persons duties that will distract them.

6. And even if one does not experience these swoons, this course of action is necessary if the imagination is greatly occupied, even if with very sublime things of prayer. For it happens sometimes that these persons are not in control of themselves. If they have received some extraordinary favor from the Lord or seen some vision, then, especially, will their souls be left in such a condition that they will think they are continuing to see the vision; but this is not so, for the vision was seen no more than once. Whoever finds herself in this absorption for many days should strive to change the subject she is meditating on, for if a subject pertains to the things of God there is no difficulty in dwelling on one more than another since the faculties will be occupied in God. And sometimes one rejoices as much in considering God's creatures and the power He had in creating them as in thinking of the Creator Himself.

7. O hapless human misery that was left in this condition through sin, for even in good things we need rule and measure so as not to ruin our health and become incapable of enjoying them. And indeed what was said is fitting for many persons, especially those with weak heads or imaginations. If one follows this advice one serves our Lord more, and it is very necessary that what I said be understood. If a nun sees that one of the mysteries of the Passion or of the glory of heaven or of any other similar thing comes into her imagination and remains many days and that, although she wants to, she cannot think of something else or take away this absorption, let her understand that it is fit-

ting for her to distract herself insofar as she can. Otherwise, she will in time come to know the harm that will be done and that this absorption stems from what I mentioned: either from great bodily weakness or from the imagination, which is worse. A madman, when he goes into some frenzy, is not the master of himself, cannot divert his attention, or think of anything else, nor are there reasons that can move him to do this because he is not in control of his reasoning power. The same thing could happen here; even though the absorption is a delightful madness—or if she has the humor of melancholy—it can do her very great harm. I don't see how it could be good, for the soul is capable of enjoying God Himself. Well, even if the subject matter is not one of the mysteries that I mentioned,⁷ since God is infinite, why must the soul be held captive by just one of His mysteries or grandeurs, for there is so much in which we can be occupied? And the more of His mysteries we might want to consider the more His grandeurs will be revealed.

8. I do not mean that in the course of an hour or a day they should think on many things, for this would perhaps amount to enjoying none of them properly. Since these matters are so delicate, I would not want others to think I'm saying what it doesn't enter my mind to say, or to understand one thing for another. Certainly, it is so important to understand this chapter well that even though writing about such a matter may be a tiresome thing to do, it doesn't tire me. Nor would I want whoever does not at first understand this to grow tired in reading it many times, especially the prioresses and the mistresses of novices who must guide the Sisters in prayer. For the Sisters will see that if they do not walk carefully in the beginning, much time will be required afterward to remedy similar weaknesses.

9. If I were to write all that has come to my attention concerning this harm, they would see that I am right to insist so much on the matter. I want to mention only one instance, and from this one they will be able to deduce everything else. There are in one of these monasteries two Sisters, one a choir nun and the other a lay Sister,⁸ both of whom are most prayerful, mortified, humble and virtuous, much favored by the Lord, to whom He communicates His great marvels. They are especially

so detached and taken up with His love that it doesn't seem, however much we desire to catch up with them, that they fail to respond, in conformity with our lowliness, to the favors our Lord grants them. I have dwelt so much on their virtues in order that those who do not have so much virtue will fear more. When they began to experience some great impulses of desire for the Lord that they could not resist, it seemed to them the desire was mitigated when they received Communion. As a result, they obtained from their confessors permission to receive frequently. Their affliction increased so much that if they did not receive Communion each day, it seemed to them they would die. The confessors, since they saw souls like these with such great desires, thought daily Communion was a suitable remedy for the complaint; and the one confessor was a very spiritual man.

10. The matter didn't stop here. In the case of one of the nuns, her longings were so great that she found it necessary to receive Communion early in the morning so as to be able to live; that was her opinion, for the two were not souls that would feign anything, nor for anything in the world would they tell a lie. I was not there, but the prioress⁹ wrote to me of what was going on, saying that she could not get anywhere with them and that competent persons held that since nothing else could be done this remedy should be used. I at once, by the grace of God, understood the situation. Nonetheless, I remained silent until I could be present there, for I feared lest I be mistaken; and it would not have been right to contradict the one who approved, until giving him my reasons.

11. He was so humble that as soon as I went there and spoke to him he agreed with me. The other one was not so spiritual, hardly at all in comparison. There was no argument that could persuade him. But I cared little about persuading this one because I was not so obliged to him. I began to speak to the nuns and give many reasons in my opinion sufficient to make them understand that it was their imagination that made them think they would die without this remedy. They had their minds so fixed on receiving Communion as a remedy that nothing sufficed, nor was it enough to bring forth reasons. Now I saw that they were to be excused, and I told them that I too had such

desires and would give up receiving Communion so that they could believe that they wouldn't have to receive except when everyone did. I told them we would all three die, for I thought doing so would be better than to start a custom like this in these houses where there were others who loved God as much as they and would want to do likewise.

12. The harm the custom had caused was so extreme—and the devil must have meddled—that since they did not receive Communion, they truly thought they would die. I showed great severity, because the more I saw that they were not submitting themselves to obedience (because in their opinion they could not do so) the more clearly I saw that the desire was a temptation. They passed through that day with a good deal of difficulty; and another day, with a little less. And so the impulsion continued to diminish in such a way that even if I received Communion, because I was ordered to do so (for the confessor saw them so weak that he didn't give them the same order), they bore this very well.

13. Within a short time both they and everyone else recognized that this had been a temptation. And they realized how good it had been to remedy the situation in time, for a little later more things happened in that house that were disturbing to the superiors (not through the fault of these two nuns—perhaps later I may say something about it); and these superiors would not, in addition, have taken well to a custom like that, nor would they have tolerated it.

14. Oh, how many things of this sort I could mention. I'll mention only one other. It didn't happen in a monastery of ours but in a monastery of Bernardines. There was a nun there who was no less virtuous than those mentioned. Through disciplines and fasts she became so weak that each time she received Communion or had occasion to be enkindled in devotion she would immediately fall to the floor and there remain for eight or nine hours. It seemed to her and everyone else that she was experiencing a rapture. This happened so often that if a remedy had not been provided, much harm would have resulted. The report of the raptures spread through the whole locality. It saddened

me to hear about her experience because, thanks be to the Lord, I understood its nature, and I feared about where it would end up. Her confessor was a close friend of mine, and he came to tell me about it. I told him what I understood and why the absorption was a waste of time and couldn't possibly be a rapture, but the result of weakness. I told him to take away her fasts and disciplines and to distract her. She was obedient; she did as he said. As soon as she began to gain strength there was no more thought of rapture. And if indeed the experience had been one of rapture nothing would have sufficed to prevent it except the will of God, for the force of the spirit is so great that our efforts are not sufficient to resist. And, as I said,¹⁰ a rapture leaves great effects in the soul; this other leaves no more effects than if it had not occurred, but tiredness in the body.

15. Let it, therefore, be understood from this example that anything that so controls us that we know our reason is not free should be held as suspect. Know that liberty of spirit will never be gained in this way. For one of the traits reason has is that it can find God in all things and be able to think about them. All the rest is subjection of spirit and, apart from the harm done to the body, so binds the soul as to hinder growth. The soul here resembles someone on a journey who enters a quagmire or swamp and thus cannot move onward. And, in order to advance, a soul must not only walk but fly. This immobility happens frequently when, as they say (and it seems to them), they are immersed in the divinity and cannot help themselves or find a remedy by diverting their attention because they are suspended.

16. Let them note that I again advise that in an instance of one day or four or eight there is nothing to fear, for it is not unusual for someone naturally weak to remain stunned for a number of days. If the matter goes beyond this, a remedy is necessary. The good in all this is that there is no sinful fault, nor will these souls fail to gain merit. But there are the difficulties I mentioned and many more. In the matter concerning Communion, it will be a very great difficulty, because of the soul's love, if there is no submission in these things to the confessor and the prioress. Even though the soul feels drawn to solitude, it shouldn't go to the extreme of not consulting with them. It's

necessary in this just as in other things that souls mortify themselves and be brought to understand that refraining from doing one's own will is more fitting than the experience of consolation.

17. Our self-love, too, can get mixed in with these experiences. It has happened to me sometimes that when I saw others receiving Communion just after I had received myself (to the point that the sacred species must have been still intact), I would desire not to have received so as to receive again. Since this happened to me so many times, I came afterward to notice (for at the time it didn't seem to me there was anything to give careful attention to) how the desire came more from wanting my own satisfaction than from love of God. Since in receiving Communion we, for the most part, experience tenderness and delight, that desire to receive again was taking hold of me. If its purpose was to have God within my soul, I already had Him; if it was to fulfill the obligation of going to Holy Communion, I had already done so; if to receive the favors that are bestowed with the Blessed Sacrament, I had already received them. Finally, I came to understand clearly that there was no other purpose in the desire than to experience again that sensible delight.

18. I remember that in a place where we had one of our monasteries I knew a woman who was a very great servant of God in the opinion of the whole town, and she must have been. She received Communion daily and did not have a particular confessor; but on one day she would go to one church to receive Communion, and on another day to another. I noted this and wished more that she obey someone than receive Communion so often. She was in a house by herself and, in my opinion, doing whatever she wanted. But since she was good, all that she did was considered good. I told her of this at times, but she didn't pay any attention to me, and with reason, for she was much better than I. But in this matter I didn't think I was mistaken. The holy Fray Peter of Alcántara came to that place, and I arranged that he talk to her. I did not rest satisfied with the account she gave him. But perhaps she had nothing more to tell, for we are so miserable that we are never much satisfied except with those who follow our own way; for I believe that she had served the Lord more and done more penance in one year than I had in many.

19. But to come to the point, she fell sick with a fatal illness and diligently arranged that Mass be said in her house each day and that she receive the Blessed Sacrament. Since the sickness continued, a priest, a good servant of God, who often said the Mass for her, didn't think it was proper that she receive Communion daily in her house. The devil must have tempted her, because that day happened to be her last, the day on which she died. Since she saw the Mass ending and that she was deprived of the Lord, she became so greatly vexed and angry with the priest that he came to me, much scandalized, to tell me about it. I felt very sorry, for I still don't know if she was reconciled; it seems to me she died soon afterward.

20. Hence I came to understand the harm done by following our own will in no matter what; and especially in so important a matter. For it is right that those who approach the Lord with such frequency should so understand their own unworthiness as to refuse to follow their own opinion, but supply, by obedience to a command, that which is lacking in order to approach so great a Lord — and what is lacking must be great. This good soul had the opportunity to humble herself very much, and perhaps she would have thereby merited more than by receiving Communion. It should be understood that the priest was not at fault, but that the Lord, seeing her misery and how unworthy she was, had thus ordained in order to enter so wretched a lodging. This is what a certain person did whom discreet confessors often refused to allow to receive Communion,¹¹ for she went frequently. This person, though she felt the loss very deeply, desired, on the other hand, the honor of God more than her own and did nothing but praise Him because He had awakened the confessor to look after her and not let His Majesty enter so wretched a lodging. And with these reflections she obeyed, with deep calm in her soul, although with a tender and loving pain. But not for the whole world together would she have gone against what was commanded her.

21. Believe me, it is clear that a love of God (I do not mean that it is really love but that in our opinion it is) that so stirs the passions that one ends up offending the Lord, or so alters the peace of the enamoured soul that no attention is paid to reason,

is in fact self-seeking. And the devil will be on the alert to afflict us when he thinks he can do us more harm, as he did to this woman. For certainly it frightened me very much, although not because I believed it would play a part in hindering her salvation, for the goodness of God is great, but because the temptation came at the worst time.

22. I have mentioned the matter here so that the prioresses might be warned and the Sisters might fear, reflect, and examine themselves on the manner in which they approach to receive so great a favor. If they approach in order to please God, they already know that He is pleased more by obedience than by sacrifice.¹² Well, if this is true and if I merit more, why am I disturbed? I do not say they are left without a humble distress, for not all souls have reached such perfection that they will be freed from suffering distress merely by the fact that they know they are doing what is more pleasing to God. Clearly, if the will is very detached from all self-interest, it will not feel anything. Rather it will rejoice that it is offered an occasion to please the Lord in something so costly, and it will humble itself and be just as satisfied by making a spiritual communion.

23. In the beginning of the spiritual life these great desires to approach the Lord are favors granted by God. This is true also at the end, but I say the beginning because at that time they should be more appreciated. Since in other things pertaining to perfection that I mentioned¹³ these beginners are not so advanced, it may be readily granted them that they experience tenderness and feel pain when Communion is taken from them, provided the pain is borne with peace of soul and they draw forth acts of humility as a result. But when these souls experience some disturbance or passion and become angry with the prioress or confessor, they should believe that their desire to receive is an obvious temptation. This also holds true if someone decides to receive Communion even though the confessor says not to receive. I would not want the merit that is thereby derived, for in such matters we must not be the judges of our own case. He who has the keys to bind and loose must be the one to judge.¹⁴ That we might have understanding in things so important, may it please the Lord to give us light; and may His help not fail lest we cause Him displeasure through the favors He grants us.

Chapter 7

How one must deal with the nuns who have melancholy.¹ This chapter is necessary for prioresses.

THESE SISTERS OF MINE at St. Joseph's in Salamanca, where I am staying while writing this, have repeatedly asked me to say something about how one must deal with the nuns who have that bodily humor called melancholy. For however much we strive not to accept those who have it, it is subtle and feigns death when it needs to, and thus we do not recognize it until the matter cannot be remedied. It seems to me that in a little book I said something about this;² I don't remember. Little is lost in saying something here, if the Lord be pleased that I succeed in doing so. It could be that I said something about this already, at another time; I would mention it another hundred times if I thought I could say something pertinent about the matter. So many are the contrivances that this humor seeks in order to do its own will that there is a need to search them out in order to know how to bear with those who have it and govern them so that no harm is done to the other nuns.

2. It must be pointed out that not all those who have this humor are so troublesome, for those who are humble and good-natured, even though they are disturbed within themselves, do not hurt others, especially if they possess sound intelligence. And also there are greater and lesser degrees of this humor. Certainly, I believe the devil takes melancholy as a means for trying to win over some persons. And if they do not walk with great care, he will do so. For since this humor can subdue reason, what won't our passions do once reason is darkened? It seems that if reason is wanting, madness results, and so it does. But in those of whom we are now speaking, the melancholy doesn't reach the point of madness, which would be much less harmful. But to have to consider someone a rational person and deal with her as such even though she isn't is an unbearable burden. Those who are totally afflicted with this illness are to be pitied, but they do no harm, and if there is a means for bringing them under control, it is to put fear into them.

3. With those in whom this very harmful affliction has just begun, even though it is not so strong, the same remedy is necessary if other attempts prove insufficient. The affliction, in sum, springs from that humor or root and stems from that stock. And it is necessary that the prioress make use of the penances of the order and strive to bring these persons into submission in such a way as to make them understand they will obtain neither all nor part of what they want. For if they come to think that sometimes their cries, and the furies the devil speaks through them in order to bring them to ruin if he can, are sufficient for them to get what they want, they will be lost. And one such person is enough to disrupt the quiet of a monastery. Since the poor little thing has no one to help her defend herself from the things the devil puts before her, it is necessary for the prioress to proceed with the greatest care in governing her not only in exterior but also in interior matters. For since reason is obscured in the sick person, it must be clear in the prioress so that the devil doesn't begin to bring that soul under his control, taking that affliction as a means. Only at intervals does this humor afflict so much as to subdue reason. And then the person is not at fault, just as insane people are not at fault for the foolish things they do. But those who are not insane, whose reason is weak and at other times well, still have some fault. Thus it is a dangerous thing if during the times in which they are ill they begin to take liberties, which is a terrible artifice of the devil. It's necessary that they do not do so; otherwise, they will not be masters of themselves when they are well. If we consider the matter, that which interests these melancholic persons most is getting their own way, saying everything that comes to their lips, looking at the faults of others with which they hide their own, and finding rest in what gives them pleasure; in sum, they are like a person who cannot bear anyone who resists him. Well, if the passions go unmortified, and each passion seeks to get what it wants, what would happen if no one resisted them?

4. I repeat, as one who has seen and dealt with many persons having this affliction, that there is no other remedy for it than to make these persons submit in all the ways and means possible. If words do not suffice, use punishment; if light punishment is

not enough, try heavy; if one month in the prison cell is not enough, try four months; no greater good can be done for their souls. For as I have said³ and I repeat (and it is important for the afflicted themselves to understand this, even though at times they may be unable to help themselves), since the affliction is not confirmed madness of the kind that excuses one from any fault—although sometimes it may be, but it is not always so—the soul remains in much danger. But sometimes, as I say, reason is so overpowered that those afflicted will be forced to do or say what they did and said when they had no control. It is a great mercy from God toward those suffering this affliction that they may submit to someone who will govern them through this danger that I mentioned,⁴ for herein lies all their good. And, for the love of God, if anyone read this let her reflect that perhaps it is a matter of her own salvation.

5. I know some persons who are on the borderline of losing their minds completely. But they are humble and so fearful of offending God that even though they may be dissolving in tears and grieving within themselves, they don't do anything but what they are ordered to do. And they suffer their illness as others do theirs; although this one is a greater martyrdom. Thus they will have greater glory and have their purgatory here in this life instead of the next. But I repeat that those who do not submit willingly should be urged to do so by the prioress. And let them not be deceived with indiscreet pieties lest they end up disturbing all with their confusion.

6. There is another very great harm, leaving aside the danger that was mentioned:⁵ Since the afflicted nun appears to be good and the force the illness exercises interiorly is not understood, our nature is so miserable that each one will think that she herself is melancholic and that thus others must bear with her. And, in point of fact, the devil will cause the matter to be thus understood, and he will bring about such havoc that when one comes to recognize the fact there will be difficulty in providing a remedy. This matter is so important that no negligence whatsoever should be allowed. But if the melancholic nun should resist the prelate, who is the superior, she should pay for it in the same way as the healthy nun and should not be pardoned for any-

thing. If she should utter an insulting word to her Sister, the same holds true. So likewise in all similar things.

7. It seems to be unjust to punish a sick person, who can't help it, just as one would a healthy person. Therefore, it would also be unjust to bind and whip the insane, and the just thing would be to allow them to kill everyone. Believe me, I have tried and, in my opinion, attempted many remedies, and I find no other. It absolutely must not be tolerated that the prioress out of pity allow such nuns to begin taking liberties, for when she gets down to remedying the situation much harm will have already been done to others. If the insane are bound and chastised so that they will not kill others, and this is right and even seems to be a very compassionate thing to do since they cannot control themselves, how much more must one be careful not to allow these melancholic persons liberties by which they could harm souls. And I truly believe that this affliction is often, as I have said,⁶ found in those whose dispositions are unrestrained, lacking in humility, and poorly disciplined; and the humor doesn't have as much strength as in the insane. I mean that "in some" the humor doesn't have as much strength, for I have seen that when there is someone to fear they do control themselves and they can. Well, why can't they do so for God? I fear that the devil, under the guise of this humor, as I have said,⁷ wants to gain many souls.

8. Nowadays the term is used more than usual, and it happens that all self-will and freedom go by the name melancholy. Thus I have thought that in these houses and in all Religious houses, this term should not be uttered. For the term seems to bring along with it freedom from any control. Rather, the condition should be called a serious illness—and how truly it is one—and be cared for as such. For sometimes it is very necessary to reduce the humor by means of medicine in order that it be endured; and the nun must remain in the infirmary and understand that when she comes out and returns to the community she must be humble like all and obey as do all. And she must understand that when she does not do so she may not use the humor as her defense. For the reasons that I have mentioned, and more could be said, this procedure is fitting. The prioress

must, without letting these nuns realize it, lead them with much compassion, like a true mother, and seek whatever means she can to provide a remedy.

9. It seems that I am contradicting myself because up to now I said that these nuns must be dealt with strictly. So I repeat that they must not think they can come out and do what they want, nor should they be allowed out except under the condition that they must obey. For the harm lies in their thinking that they will be free to do whatever they want. But the prioress can refrain from ordering them to do what she sees they will be unable to do because of their not having the strength within themselves. She should lead them with all the skill and love necessary so that if possible they submit out of love, which would be much better, and usually happens. She should show that she greatly loves them and make this known through words and deeds. And she must note that the greatest remedy she has is to keep them much occupied with duties so that they do not have the opportunity to be imagining things, for herein lies all their trouble. And even though they may not perform these duties so well, she should suffer some defects so as not to have to suffer other greater ones that will arise if the melancholy overpowers them. I know that this is the most suitable remedy you can provide. And strive that they do not have long periods of prayer, not even those established in the constitutions, because, for the greater part, their imaginations are weak and the long prayer will do them much harm. Otherwise, they will fancy things that neither they nor anyone who hears them will ever understand. Let her take care that they eat fish only rarely;⁸ and also during the fasts, they ought not fast as much as do the others.

10. It seems excessive to give so much advice for this affliction and not for any other, there being so many serious ones in our miserable life, especially when considering the weakness of women. It is for two reasons that I do so: First, it seems these nuns are well, for they don't want to know that they have this affliction. Since it doesn't force them to stay in bed, because they do not have a fever, or to call the doctor, it's necessary for the prioress to be their doctor; for it is a sickness more prejudicial to all perfection than that of those who are in bed and in danger of

death. Second, in the case of other illnesses it happens that either one is cured or one dies; with this illness, very seldom are the afflicted cured, nor do they die from it but they come to lose their minds completely—which is a death capable of killing all the nuns. They suffer more than death in themselves through afflictions, fantasies, and scruples, all of which they call temptations, and so they will have a great deal of merit. If they could come to understand that the illness is the cause of these, they would find much relief provided they paid no attention to them.

Indeed, I have great compassion for them, and it is also right that all those living with them have it. These latter should reflect that the Lord can give this compassion, and they should bear up with them, without letting this be known as I have said.⁹ Please the Lord I may have succeeded in pointing out the proper thing to do in regard to so serious an illness.

Chapter 8

Some counsels concerning revelations and visions.

SOME PERSONS SEEM TO BECOME frightened just in hearing the words “visions” and “revelations.” I don’t understand why they consider this path along which God leads a soul such a dangerous one, or from where this dread comes. I do not want to treat now of which ones are good and which bad, or with the signs for discernment that I have heard from very learned persons; but of what ought to be done by someone who sees herself in this situation, for few are the confessors who will not intimidate her. Indeed, it doesn’t cause as much fear or scandal to say that the devil is representing many kinds of temptation, the spirit of blasphemy, and absurd and indecent things as it does to say that an angel appeared or spoke or that our Lord Jesus Christ crucified was seen.

2. Nor do I want to treat at present of the revelations that are from God (for by now the fact that these bring great blessings to the soul goes without saying), but of the representations made by the devil in order to deceive and of how he makes use of the

image of Christ our Lord, or of his saints. I hold that His Majesty will not give the devil the power to deceive a person by means of similar figures unless through that person's own fault, but that the devil himself will be the one deceived. (I mean, he will not deceive where there is humility).¹ Thus, there is no reason to be terrified but to trust in the Lord and pay little attention to these things except for the sake of praising the Lord more.

3. I know a person whose confessors caused her much distress over similar things; but afterward, from what she could understand through the great effects and good works that resulted, she judged that her experiences were from God. And she was very distressed that because of the command they gave her she had to bless herself and make the fig when she saw a vision.² Later, in talking with a highly learned Dominican,³ she was told by him that this was wrong, that no one should do so, for wherever we see the image of our Lord, it is good to pay it reverence, even if the devil may have painted it. The devil is a great painter, and in wanting to do us an evil deed, he rather does us a good one if he paints a crucifix or other image so lifelike that he leaves it engraven in our heart. This reasoning pleased me much, for when we see a very good painting, even though we might know that a bad man did it, we wouldn't fail to esteem the image that was painted nor would we pay attention to the painter and lose our devotion. For the good or the evil does not lie in the vision but in the one who sees it and in whether or not she profits by it with humility; for if humility is present, no harm can be done not even by the devil. And if humility is not present, even if the visions be from God they will be of no benefit. For if that favor which should humble a nun when she sees she is unworthy of it makes her proud, she will be like the spider that converts everything it eats into poison; or like the bee that converts it all into honey.

4. I want to explain myself further: Our Lord, through His goodness, may wish to represent Himself to a soul so that it might know or love Him more, or that He might show it one of His secrets, or grant it some particular gifts or favors. And if the soul, as I have said,⁴ considers itself a saint because of a favor (for it should be confounded and know how little its lowliness

deserves any favor) and thinks that this favor comes to it because of some service it has rendered, clearly the great good that could result is converted into evil, as in the example of the spider. Well now, let us suppose that the devil so as to incite pride causes these apparitions. The soul may think they are from God, humble itself, recognize its unworthiness to receive so great a favor, and strive to serve more. For in seeing itself rich, while not even deserving to eat the crumbs that fall from the table⁵ of the persons of whom it has heard that God grants these favors (I mean, not deserving to be a servant of any of them), it humbles itself, begins to force itself to do penance, prays more, and takes greater care not to offend this Lord. For it thinks it is He who grants this favor, and obeys with greater perfection. If it responds in these ways, I am sure the devil will not return, but will be put to shame, and that no harm will be left in the soul.

5. When she is told some things to do, or about the future, the nun should speak about the matter with a discreet and learned confessor, and not do or believe anything other than what he tells her. She can communicate about it with the prioress so that the latter might provide her with such a confessor. And let her be careful, for if she doesn't obey what the confessor tells her and fails to be guided by him, the experience comes from either the bad spirit or dreadful melancholy. Even if the confessor may not be right, she will be more right in not departing from what he tells her, even though it may be an angel of God who speaks to her in the favor. For His Majesty will enlighten the confessor or ordain how the task may be carried out. In following the above advice, there is no danger; in doing otherwise, there can be many dangers and much harm.

6. Let us keep in mind that human nature is very weak, especially in women, and in this way of prayer weakness shows itself more. Thus it is necessary that we don't immediately think that every little thing that comes to our fancy is a vision, and we should believe that when a vision does occur, this will be clearly known. Where some melancholy is present, there is need for much greater care. For in regard to these fancies, things have been told to me that have left me amazed at how it is possible for such persons truly to think that they see what they do not see.

7. Once a confessor, who was much admired, came to see me, for he was confessor to a person who told him that for many days our Lady appeared to her, sat on her bed, and spoke for over an hour telling her about future events and a great deal more. Among many absurdities there were some predictions that turned out to be right, and as a result the apparitions were thought to be true. I understood immediately the nature of the experience, although I did not dare say so. For we are in a world in which it is necessary to consider the opinions others have of us in order that our words take effect. So I told him to wait to see if the prophecies would prove true and to look for other effects and inquire into the life of that person. In the end he came to understand that the whole thing was nonsense.

8. I could tell of so many things like this that would more than justify my advice, that is: that a soul should not believe things at once, but that it wait for time to pass and understand itself well before telling the confessor so that it doesn't deceive him without wanting to deceive him. For if he doesn't have experience of these things, his learning however great will not suffice for him to understand them. Not so long ago (in fact, very recently) there was a man who spoke much nonsense about things like these to some very learned and spiritual men. When he spoke with a person who had experienced such favors from the Lord, she saw clearly that he was suffering from madness together with illusion. Although the illusion wasn't then manifest but very dissimulated, the Lord after a while revealed it clearly; but this person who understood what the cause was had first to suffer much in not being believed.⁶

9. For these reasons and other similar ones it's very necessary for each Sister to speak clearly about her prayer to the prioress. The prioress should carefully consider the temperament and perfection in virtue of that Sister so that she might advise the confessor and provide for better understanding. She should choose a confessor for this particular purpose if the ordinary confessor is not sufficient for such matters. Let the Sisters be very careful that things like these, even though very truly from God, or favors recognized as miraculous, be not communicated to outsiders or to confessors who don't have the prudence to be

silent. This is most important, more so than they may think, and it's important that the Sisters not discuss these things among themselves. And the prioress, with prudence, should always be seen as tending more to praise those who distinguish themselves in matters pertaining to humility, mortification, and obedience than those God leads by this very supernatural path of prayer, even though the latter may have all these other virtues. For if this path is from the spirit of the Lord, it brings with it the humility to like being despised. And the praise of the above virtues will not harm the person who is led by this path and will benefit others. For since the others cannot attain to these things, for God gives to whomever He wants, let them flee sadness and seek to have the other virtues. Although God also gives these other virtues, they can in addition be the objects of our striving, and they are of great value for the Religious life. May His Majesty give them to us since no one who strives for them with effort, solicitude, prayer, and confidence in His mercy will be denied by Him.

Chapter 9

Deals with how she left Medina del Campo for the foundation of St. Joseph's in Malagon.

HOW FAR I'VE WANDERED from my subject! And yet, it could be that some of these counsels that were mentioned were more opportune than my telling about the foundations.

Well now, while at St. Joseph's in Medina del Campo I observed with great consolation how those Sisters were following in the footsteps of the Sisters of St. Joseph's in Avila through complete religious dedication, sisterly love, and spirituality. I observed, too, how our Lord provided for His house, for the needs of the chapel as well as for those of the Sisters. Some of the new ones entering the monastery it seemed the Lord had chosen as the kind of cement that is suited to an edifice like this. In these beginning stages, all the good, I think, will be for the sake of the future. For since these Sisters find the path, those who are to come will follow it.

2. There was a lady in Toledo, a sister of the duke of Medina-celi, in whose home I had stayed by order of my superiors, as I mentioned more at length in writing about the foundation of St. Joseph's.¹ While I was in her home, she got to like me in a special way, which in turn must have been a means by which this lady was stirred to do what she did. For His Majesty often makes use of means like these that seem fruitless to us who don't know the future. Since this lady knew that I had permission to found monasteries, she began to urge me very much to make a foundation in her town of Malagón.² I in no way wanted to accept since the town was so small that we would be forced to have an income in order to support ourselves—something to which I was very much opposed.

3. Both my confessor³ and other learned men with whom I discussed the matter told me that I was doing wrong, that since the holy Council had given permission to have an income, I shouldn't, because of my own opinion, fail to found a monastery where God could be so much served. To this were added the many urgings of this lady which I could not resist. She provided a sufficient income, for I am always in favor of monasteries being either completely poor or maintained in such a way that the nuns will not need to beg from anyone for their needs.

4. I made every effort I could so that none of the nuns would possess anything, but that they would observe the constitutions in their entirety as in our other monasteries founded in poverty. Having completed all the paper work, I sent for some Sisters to make the foundation, and along with that lady we went to Malagón. When we got there, the house was not yet ready for us to move in. And so we were detained for more than eight days in an apartment of this lady's castle.

5. On Palm Sunday,⁴ in the year 1568, with the people of the town, we went in procession to the church, in our white mantles and with veils covering our faces. A sermon was preached there, and from that church the Blessed Sacrament was brought to our monastery. This inspired great devotion in everybody. I stayed there for some days. On one of those days, while in prayer after having received Communion, I understood from our Lord that He would be served in that house. I don't think I was there quite

two months, for my spirit was eager to go and found a house in Valladolid, and the reason was the one I will now mention.

Chapter 10

Deals with the foundation of the house in Valladolid. Its title is The Conception of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

FOUR OR FIVE MONTHS before this monastery of St. Joseph's in Malagón was founded, I was speaking with a distinguished young gentleman¹ who told me that if I wanted to establish a monastery in Valladolid he would most willingly give me a house he owned with a large and good garden containing a vineyard. He wanted to give away the property immediately; it was very valuable. I accepted his offer, although I wasn't too decided on making a foundation where the property was, since the place was about a quarter of a league outside the city. But it seemed to me that we could move to the city once the possession of a house had been taken in that district. And since he offered it so willingly, I did not want to refuse his good deed or hinder his devotion.²

2. Two months later, more or less, he was struck by a sudden illness that took away his speech, and he could not confess well, although he made many signs to ask the Lord's pardon. He died shortly afterward, very far from where I was.³ The Lord told me that the young man's salvation had been in great jeopardy but that he had received mercy for the service he had rendered to the Blessed Mother in giving that house to be a monastery of her order; however, that he would not leave purgatory until the first Mass was said there, that then he would leave. I was so conscious of the grievous afflictions of this soul that even though I wanted to make a foundation in Toledo, I set it aside for then and hastened as much as I could to found a house in Valladolid.

3. It couldn't be made as quickly as I desired, for I was forced to delay a number of days at St. Joseph's in Avila, which was under my charge, and afterward at St. Joseph's in Medina del Campo, for I passed by there. I was in prayer one day in Medina

when the Lord told me to hurry because that soul was suffering very much. Although I didn't have the means available, I set to work and entered Valladolid on the feast of St. Lawrence.⁴ And when I saw the house, I was dismayed; I knew that it would be a foolish mistake for nuns to stay there. The cost to them would be very great. For although the site was most gratifying on account of the garden which was so delightful, the nuns would certainly become sick, for it was near a river.

4. Though tired out, I had to go to Mass at a monastery of our order. I saw that the monastery was at the entrance to the city,⁵ and this was so far away that my distress was doubled. Nonetheless, I said nothing to my companions⁶ so as not to discourage them. Although weak, I had some faith that the Lord, by whom I had been told what was just mentioned, would provide a remedy. I arranged very secretly for workmen to come and begin building walls to provide for recollection, and other necessary things. With us, were the priest I mentioned, Julián de Avila,⁷ and one of the friars mentioned,⁸ who desired to be discalced and who was learning about our method of procedure in these houses. Julián de Avila was engaged in seeking to obtain the license from the bishop, who, before I arrived, had given us reason to hope that it would be granted. The license could not be gotten so quickly as to prevent a Sunday from coming along first. But permission was granted to say Mass where the church would be, and thus it was said for us.

5. I had forgotten that what was told to me about that soul would then be accomplished.⁹ For, although I was told "at the first Mass," I thought that it would be at the one in which the Blessed Sacrament would be reserved. When the priest¹⁰ came with the Blessed Sacrament to the place where we were to receive Communion and I approached to receive it, the gentleman I mentioned appeared beside him, his face joyful and resplendent. With hands folded, he thanked me for what I had done so that he could leave purgatory and go to heaven. And indeed before the first locution, when I heard that he was on the way to salvation, I had not had such a thing in mind and was consequently much afflicted. It seemed to me that another way of dying would have been necessary in view of the way he had

lived. For although he had performed many good deeds, he was much involved in the things of the world. True, though, he had told my companions that he kept death very much before him. It is important to know that our Lord is pleased with any service rendered to His Mother, and great is His mercy. May He be blessed and praised for everything. For He repays our lowly deeds with eternal life and glory, and He makes them great while they are in fact of little value.

6. Well, when the feastday of our Lady's Assumption arrived, which was August 15, 1568, we took possession of this monastery. We were there only a short while¹¹ because almost all of us fell very sick. This was seen by a lady from that city, Doña Mariá de Mendoza, who is the wife of Commander Cobos¹² and mother of the marquis of Camarasa. She is a very Christian woman and most charitable. The superabundance of alms she gave away made this clear. When she saw the situation, and before I spoke to her about the matter, she showed me much charity; for she is the sister of the bishop of Avila who was very favorable toward us in the foundation of the first monastery and is still so in all that pertains to our order.¹³ Since she is very charitable and saw that we could not remain there without great hardship and also that the site was far from where we could receive alms, as well as unhealthy, she told us to give that house to her and that she would buy us another. And this she did. The one she gave us was worth much more, and in addition she has given all that is necessary up till now, and she will do so as long as she lives.

7. On the feast of St. Blaise¹⁴ we moved there in a large procession, and with great devotion shown on the part of the people; and their devotedness continues even to this day, for the Lord grants many favors in that house. And He has brought souls whose sanctity in due time will be recounted so that He may be praised. For it is by such means that the Lord desires to magnify His works and favor His creatures. In fact, a very young girl entered there and showed what the world is by despising it. It has occurred to me to speak of her here so that those who have great love for the world will be put to shame and that young girls to whom the Lord may give good desires and inspirations will take her example and carry them out.

8. There is in this place a lady named Doña María de Acuña, a sister of the count of Buendía. She was married to the governor of Castile. When he died, she was left, while still quite young, with a son and two daughters. She began to live so holy a life and rear her children in such virtue that she merited from the Lord that He desire these children for Himself. (I was mistaken, for she was left with three daughters.) The one daughter became a nun immediately. The other one did not want to marry but lived a very edifying life with her mother.¹⁵ The son at an early age began to understand what the world was and felt so intensely God's call to enter religious life that no one was able to prevent him from following it. His mother was so delighted with his vocation that she helped him very much by her prayers to our Lord, although for fear of his relatives she did not show this openly. In sum, when the Lord wants a soul for Himself, creatures have little strength to prevent this. So it happened in this case, for after having been delayed for three years and strongly urged to change his mind, he entered the Society of Jesus.¹⁶ A confessor of this lady¹⁷ told me that he had been informed by her that she had never in her life experienced such joy in her heart as on the day her son made his profession.

9. O Lord! What a great favor You grant to those children whose parents love them so much as to want them to possess their estates, inheritance, and riches in that blessed life that has no end! It is a great pity the world is now so unfortunate and blind that it seems to parents their honor lies in not letting the dung of this world's goods be forgotten and in not remembering that sooner or later these things will come to an end. And everything that has limits, even though it lasts a while, will eventually come to an end; and little importance should be given to it. Such parents want to sustain their own vanities at a cost to their children, and very boldly take from God souls that He wants for Himself. And they take from these souls a good so great (God inviting them to be His guest) that, even were the good not to last forever, it would still be extraordinary to see oneself freed from the tiresomeness of the world and its laws; and the more goods people possess, the greater the tedium. Open the eyes of parents, my God. Make them understand the kind of love they are

obliged to have for their children so that they do not do these children so much wrong and are not complained about before God in that final judgment where, even though they may not want to know it, the value of each thing will be understood.

10. Well, this gentleman, who was the son of this Doña María de Acuña (his name was Don Antonio de Padilla), at the age of seventeen, more or less, was mercifully drawn by God from the world. Hence, the estates went to the oldest daughter, whose name was Doña Luisa de Padilla. For the count of Buendía had no sons, and Don Antonio was heir to both the earldom and the governorship of Castile. I will not mention the many things Don Antonio suffered from his relatives before going on with his plan, because this is not my purpose in writing. Whoever knows how much value those of the world place on their having an heir to their properties will fully understand.

11. O Son of the Eternal Father, Jesus Christ, our Lord, true King of all! What did You leave in the world? What could we, your descendants, inherit from You? What did You possess, my Lord, but trials, sufferings, and dishonors? You had nothing but a wooden beam on which to swallow the painfully difficult drink of death. In sum, my God, it does not fit those of us who want to be your true children, and hold on to their inheritance, to flee suffering. Your heraldry consists of five wounds. Courage, then, my daughters; this must be our badge if we are to inherit His kingdom. Not with rest, not with favors, not with honors, not with riches will that which He bought with so much blood be gained. O illustrious people! Open your eyes for the love of God; behold that the true knights of Jesus Christ and the princes of His Church, a St. Peter and a St. Paul, did not follow the road you follow. Do you think perhaps there will be a new road for you? Do not believe it. Behold the Lord is beginning to show it to you through such young persons as those of whom we are now speaking.

12. At times I have seen and spoken to this Don Antonio. He would have wanted even many more possessions so as to leave them all. Blessed the young man and blessed the young girl who have merited so much from God that at the age in which people are usually overpowered by the world, they trampled on it. Blessed be He who bestowed on them so much good.

13. Well since the estates were left to the older sister, it happened that she didn't attribute any more importance to them than did her brother. For from the time she was a child she gave herself so much to prayer (which is the place where the Lord gives the light to understand truths) that she esteemed these things as little as did her brother. Oh, God help me, how many trials, torments, litigations, and even risking of lives and honor many would undergo to be heir to this inheritance. She suffered greatly in order to be allowed to renounce it. So goes this world; it would clearly show us its frenzy if we were not blind. Very willingly, so that they might leave her free from this inheritance, she renounced it in favor of her sister — for there was no one else — who was ten or eleven years old. Immediately, in order to perpetuate their miserable family name, her relatives arranged to have this young girl marry an uncle of hers, the brother of her father, and obtained a dispensation from the Supreme Pontiff; and the two were engaged.

14. The Lord did not desire that the daughter of such a mother and the sister of both such a brother and such sisters be left more deceived than they, and thus what I will now relate happened. When the girl began to enjoy the worldly clothes and finery that, in accord with her status, would attract the fancy of a girl at that tender age (two months had not yet gone by from the time of her engagement), the Lord began to give her light, although she was not then aware of what He was doing. Once at the close of a day she had spent most happily with her fiancé, whom she loved more intensely than her age warranted, she became extremely sad at seeing how the day came to an end and that likewise all days would come to an end. Oh, greatness of God! That very happiness that the joys of perishable things gave her, she came to abhor! She began to experience such great sadness that she couldn't hide it from her fiancé, nor did she know how to tell him, nor could she, even though he was questioning her.

15. At that time she had to go on an unavoidable journey to a place far from where she lived. She felt very sorry since she loved him so much. But soon the Lord revealed to her the cause of her affliction; it was, in fact, that her soul was inclined toward that

which would have no end. She began to consider how her brother and sister had chosen the safer path and left her amid the world's dangers. This, on the one hand; on the other hand, the fact that it seemed there was no remedy was exhausting her (for she wasn't aware, until she asked, that even though she was engaged it was still possible for her to become a nun). And above all, the love she had for her fiancé did not allow her to come to a decision. So she was suffering much distress.

16. Since the Lord wanted her for Himself, He gradually took away this love she had for her fiancé and increased her desire to give up everything. At this time she was moved only by the desire to be saved and to seek the best means. For it seemed to her that in the midst of the things of the world she would forget to seek that which is eternal. This is the wisdom God infused in her at so early an age; to seek how to gain that which is without end. Fortunate soul that so early in life freed itself from the blindness in which many old people die! Once she saw that her will was free, she resolved to occupy it completely in God. Until that time she had remained silent; now she began to speak of the matter to her sister. Her sister, thinking it was a childish trifle, tried to dissuade her and told her some things about how she could be saved even though married. The young girl responded by asking her sister why she herself had given up marriage. Some days passed, and her desire went on increasing. She didn't say anything to her mother, but perhaps it was the mother who through her prayers was causing this battle in her daughter.

Chapter 11

Continues the subject that was begun about how Doña Casilda de Padilla attained her holy desires of entering religious life.

AT THIS TIME THE HABIT WAS RECEIVED by a lay Sister in this monastery of the Immaculate Conception about whose vocation I should perhaps say something.¹ Although she is from a different background (a little peasant girl), she is so virtuous,

because of the great favors God has granted her, that she deserves to be remembered here in praise of Him. And when Doña Casilda (the name of this girl beloved of the Lord) went with her grandmother,² who was her fiancé's mother, to this lay Sister's reception of the habit, she felt intensely drawn to this monastery, thinking that since it was small and the nuns were few they could serve the Lord better. But she still had not reached the decision to leave her fiancé, which, as I said,³ was what most held her back.

2. She recalled how before she was engaged she used to spend periods of time in prayer. Her mother in her goodness and holiness had brought her children up this way, for once they reached the age of seven she would make them enter an oratory from time to time, and she taught them how to reflect on the Passion of the Lord and made them go to confession frequently. And thus she witnessed this happy outcome of her desires, that her children belong only to God. She told me herself that she had always offered them to God and begged Him to take them out of the world, for she was already disillusioned and knew how little it should be esteemed. I sometimes reflect on the accidental joy that will be hers when she sees them rejoicing in eternal joys and that she was the means, and on the gratitude they will have toward her, and how on the contrary those parents who did not bring their children up as children of God (for they are children more of God than of their parents) will find themselves, together with their children, in hell, and the maledictions they will spew forth and the despair they will experience.

3. Well, to return to what I was saying, since Doña Casilda realized that she was now reluctant even to recite the rosary, she had great fear that things would always get worse. It seemed to her she saw clearly that by coming to this house her salvation would be assured. And thus she reached an unwavering decision. One morning when she came here with her sister and mother, the occasion arose for their entering inside the monastery; indeed without any worry that the young girl would do what she did. Once she saw herself inside, no one was able to get her to leave the house. So many were the tears and words with which she begged them to allow her to stay that all were fright-

ened. Her mother, although interiorly rejoicing, feared the relatives and did not want her to remain in this way lest they say that the daughter had been persuaded by her mother. And the prioress,⁴ too, felt like this, for it seemed to her that the girl was but a child and that more testing was needed. This took place in the morning. They had to stay until evening, and they sent for the girl's confessor and for Father Maestro Fray Domingo (the Dominican whom I mentioned in the beginning),⁵ who was my confessor, although I was not here then.⁶ This Father understood at once that it was the Spirit of the Lord. He helped her very much, suffering a good deal from her relatives, promising to help her so that she could return another day. (That is the way all those who seek to serve God must act. They must strive not to consider human prudence so much when they see a soul called by God.)

4. After a great deal of persuasion, and so that blame would not be placed on her mother, she came out this time. Her desires continued to increase. Her mother began to inform her relatives secretly so that the fiancé would not learn of it. They said her desire was a childish whim and that she should wait until she was of age, for she wasn't yet twelve years old. She asked why, since they found her old enough to be married and left to the world, they didn't find her old enough to give herself to God. The things she said made it appear that it wasn't she who was speaking.

5. The matter couldn't be kept so secret that her fiancé was not informed. Since she knew about this, it seemed to her that she couldn't bear waiting for him to give his consent to her entering religious life. On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, when she was in the house of her grandmother (who was also her mother-in-law to be), who didn't know anything about her desires, she begged to be allowed to go to the country with her governess to relax a while. Her grandmother, to please her, allowed her to go, in a carriage along with her servants. Giving one of the servants some money, the girl asked him to wait for her at the entrance of this monastery with some bundles of twigs or vine branches. She arranged to go in a roundabout way so that they would pass by this house. When she arrived at the en-

trance, she told the servants to ask at the turn for a jug of water and not to tell who it was for, and she quickly got down from the carriage. The servants told her not to get down, that they would bring the water to her, but she refused. The bundles were already there. She told them to tell the nuns to come to the door to get those bundles, and she stood waiting there. When the nuns opened, she entered inside and went and embraced the statue of our Lady, weeping and begging the prioress not to throw her out. The shouts of the servants were loud as was also their pounding on the door. She went to speak to them at the grille and told them that she would by no means come out and that they should go and tell her mother. The women that had gone with her broke into loud laments. She made little of it all. Her grandmother, when told the news, decided to go at once.

6. In sum, neither the girl's grandmother, nor her uncle, nor her fiancé (who came to the grille and tried to get her to change her mind) could do any more than torment her when with her, and afterward she would be stronger in her resolve. Her fiancé, after much moaning, told her that she could serve God more by giving alms. She answered that he could give them. And, in response to his other arguments, she told him that she was more obliged to seek her salvation and that she saw she was weak and that she could not be saved amid worldly occasions of sin, and that he should not complain about her because she hadn't left him except for God, and that because of this she was not offending him. Once she saw that nothing satisfied him, she got up and left him.

7. He made no impression on her; rather, she felt totally displeased with him. When God enlightens the soul with truth, temptations and stumbling blocks set by the devil help it more. For it is His Majesty who fights for the soul, and thus she saw clearly here that it was not she who was speaking.

8. Since her fiancé and relatives saw how little they accomplished in trying to get her to leave willingly, they turned to force. Thus, they obtained a court order to take her out of the monastery and that the nuns allow her to leave. During the whole time, from the feast of the Immaculate Conception to that of the Holy Innocents⁷ (when they took her away), she re-

mained in the monastery, without receiving the habit, but following all the religious observances as though she had received it, and with the greatest happiness. On the day the law officers took her away she was brought to the house of a gentleman. She was in tears, asking why they were tormenting her since it would be of no avail. In the gentleman's house men religious as well as other persons tried hard to persuade her. Some thought it was all childish, others wanted her to enjoy the married state. I'd have to go on at great length if I were to tell about the arguments she was confronted with and the way she got out of them all. She left them astonished by the things she said.

9. Since they saw they were getting nowhere, they brought her to her mother's house so as to detain her there for a while. Her mother was now tired of seeing so much disturbance, but did not by any means help her; rather, from what appeared, she was against her. It could be that she was against her so as to test her further. At least that's what she told me afterward, and she is so holy one cannot but believe what she says. But the girl did not know this. Moreover, the girl's confessor was extremely opposed. As a result, she had only God, and one of her mother's maids, who was one in whom she confided. Thus she underwent much trial and hardship until her twelfth year, when she learned that, since they couldn't get her to give up the idea, they were planning to bring her to be a nun at the monastery where her sister was,⁸ for not so much austerity was practiced there.

10. Knowing about this, she was determined to strive through every means she could to obtain her happiness by going ahead with her own plan. And thus, one day when she went to Mass with her mother, her mother went to confess in one of the confessionals. Doña Casilda then asked her governess to go to one of the Fathers and ask him to say a Mass. When she saw that the governess was gone, she placed her chopines in her sleeves, lifted her skirt and hastened as quickly as she could to this monastery, which was quite far away. Her governess, when she didn't find her, went after her; once she got near, she asked a man to catch hold of her. He said afterward that he wasn't able to move, and so he let her get away. The girl entered the first gate of the monastery, closed it, and began to shout; when the governess

arrived, this young girl was already inside the monastery. They gave her the habit immediately. And thus she fulfilled the good inspirations the Lord had placed within her. His Majesty began very shortly to repay her with spiritual favors, and she to serve Him with the greatest happiness, humility, and detachment from everything.

11. May He be blessed forever! For thus, through the rough, woolen dress of the poor He gives pleasure to one who was so attached to very costly and elegant clothes; although the dress of the poor played no part in hiding her beauty. For the Lord distributed natural graces to her as well as spiritual: a temperament and intelligence so agreeable as to awaken all to praise His Majesty. May it please Him that there be many who will thus answer His call.⁹

Chapter 12

*Tells about the life and death of a religious, Beatriz de la Encarnación, whom our Lord brought to this same house. Her life was one of high perfection, and her death was of a kind that makes it fitting for us to remember her.*¹

SOME YEARS BEFORE, A YOUNG girl, Doña Beatriz, a distant relative of Doña Casilda, entered this monastery to become a nun.² She amazed all when they saw the great virtues the Lord was forming in her. And both the nuns and the prioress affirmed that they had never noticed in any aspect of her life anything they would consider an imperfection. Nor did they ever see any other expression on her face than a modest happiness that well revealed the inner joy of her soul. With an untroubled quiet she kept strict silence in such a way that nothing singular was noticed about it. Never was she known to have spoken a reprehensible word, nor was any obstinacy seen in her, nor did she ever make an excuse, even though, as is the custom in these houses in order to practice mortification, the prioress to test her tried to blame her for something she had not done. Never did she complain about anything, or of any Sister. Nor by her expression or

word did she in the office she held give displeasure to anyone or occasion to attribute some imperfection to her. Neither was any reason found for accusing her of some fault in chapter, even though the defects the monitors would point out during chapter were very minute.³ In all events her interior and exterior composure was unusual. This arose from her keeping eternity very much in mind and the end for which God created us. She always bore the praises of God on her lips and the greatest spirit of gratitude; in sum, hers was a perpetual prayer.

2. In matters of obedience she was never at fault, but showed a readiness, perfection, and joyfulness in all that she was ordered to do. She practiced the greatest charity toward her neighbor—this was shown in such a way that she said that she would allow herself to be broken into a thousand pieces to keep any soul from being lost and so that thus all souls might find joy in their Brother, Jesus Christ (which is how she referred to our Lord). As for her trials, which were very severe, there were terrible illnesses, as I shall say afterward,⁴ with intense pain, and she suffered them with the greatest willingness and happiness, as if they were choice favors and delights. Our Lord must have given her spiritual favors and delights, for otherwise it would have been impossible for her to bear her illnesses as cheerfully as she did.

3. It happened that in this city of Valladolid some men were going to be burned because of their great crimes. She must have known that these men were not approaching their death with as good a disposition as was fitting, and this caused her the greatest affliction; with much anguish she went to our Lord and begged Him very earnestly for the salvation of those souls. And in exchange for what they deserved (or that she might obtain that grace—I don't remember the precise words), she promised to give her whole life, all the trials and sufferings she could bear. That same night the first fever struck her, and until she died she was always suffering. The condemned men, in turn, died well; hence it seems that God heard her prayer.

4. She was next afflicted with an intestinal abscess causing the severest suffering. The patience the Lord had placed in her soul was indeed necessary in order for her to endure it. This ab-

scess was so internally located that the medicines they gave were of no help until the Lord willed that it come to a head and drain, and thus she improved somewhat from this illness. With that desire for suffering given to her, she was unable to be satisfied with little, and thus once, while she was listening to a sermon on the feast of the Cross, her desire so increased that when the sermon was over she went in a tearful impulse and threw herself on her bed. When they asked her what was the matter, she answered that they should beseech God to give her many trials and that with this she would be content.

5. She spoke with the prioress about all these interior matters and in this practice found comfort. Throughout her illness, she never gave the least trouble to anyone, nor did she do anything but what the infirmarian wanted, even if it was something as slight as drinking a little water. It is very common for souls who practice prayer to desire trials when they do not have any. But when they do and are in the midst of these very trials, it is not common for them to rejoice. And thus, once when she was afflicted, though the affliction did not last long, and suffering extreme pain from an abscess in her throat so that she could not swallow, she told the prioress in the presence of the Sisters (since the prioress's duty was to console and encourage her to bear so much sickness) that she had no pain and that she would not change places with any of the Sisters who were very well. She kept the Lord, for whom she was suffering, so present before her that she tried to cover up her suffering as much as possible that others would not know how great it was. And thus, except when the pain grew intense, she complained very little.

6. It seemed to her there was no one on earth as wretched as she; thus, insofar as one could understand, her humility was great. In speaking of the virtues of other persons, she was very joyful. In matters concerning mortification she was persistent. Without letting it be noticed, she avoided what afforded her recreation, for unless one were watching closely, this would not be known. It didn't seem she lived or conversed with creatures, so little did she care about anything. However things went, she bore them with peace. She was always composed; so much so that once a Sister said to her that she seemed to be like one of

those persons of nobility so proud that they would rather die from their hunger than let anyone outside know about it. For they couldn't believe that she failed to feel some things, although it hardly seemed so.

7. She performed all her work and duties with the goal of not losing any merit, and so she used to say to the Sisters: "The smallest thing when done for the love of God is priceless; we should set our eyes, Sisters, only on this goal of love and on pleasing Him." She never meddled in things that were not her responsibility; thus she found fault with no one but herself. So strongly did she feel that no good should be said of her that she was careful not to speak well of others in their presence so as not to cause them pain. She never sought consolation (neither by going to the garden nor in any created thing), for she said it would be rude to seek relief from the sufferings that our Lord gave her. Thus she never asked for anything, but got along with what was given her. She also said that it would be a cross for her to find consolation in anything that was not God. The fact is that when I inquired from those in the house, no one had seen in her anything other than what would be seen in someone of great perfection.

8. Well, when the time arrived in which our Lord desired to take her from this life, the sufferings increased; so many illnesses came upon her together that others, in order to praise our Lord at observing the happiness with which she bore them, went at times to see her. The chaplain especially, who is the confessor in that monastery and a true servant of God, had a great desire to be present at her death. Being her confessor, he considered her a saint. God was pleased to grant him this desire. For since she was in so much pain, and although she had already been anointed they called him in case there would be need that night for her to be reconciled or helped to die. A little before nine while all were with her (and he too), about a quarter of an hour before she died, she raised her eyes, and a happiness like a shining light came over her countenance. She remained as would someone gazing on an object that gives profound joy, for she smiled twice. All those who were there, and the priest himself, received so much spiritual delight and happiness that they didn't know

what else to say than that it seemed to them they were in heaven. And with this happiness that I mention, her eyes fixed on heaven, she died, looking like an angel. Thus we are able to believe, according to our faith and according to her life, that the Lord brought her to rest in payment for the many things she had desired to suffer for Him.

9. The chaplain affirms, and has told many persons, that at the time of her burial he perceived an extremely sweet fragrance coming from her body. The Sister sacristan also affirms that despite all the candles that burned at the funeral and burial, not one of them grew smaller in size. All this can be believed as coming from the mercy of God. In speaking of these things with a confessor of hers from the Society of Jesus with whom for many years she discussed her soul, I was told that they didn't amount to much; and he said he was not surprised because he knew that our Lord communicated a great deal with her.

10. May it please His Majesty, my daughters, that we know how to profit from companionship as good as this and from many other persons whom our Lord gives us in these houses. It may be that I will say something about them so that those who are a bit lukewarm will be strengthened and that we may all praise the Lord who in this way lets His magnificent riches show forth in us weak, little women.

Chapter 13

Treats of how and by whom in the year 1568 the first house for the observance of the primitive rule by discalced Carmelite friars was founded.

BEFORE MAKING THE FOUNDATION of Valladolid, I had already agreed with both Father Fray Antonio de Jesús, who was then prior of the Carmelite monastery of St. Anne in Medina, and Fray John of the Cross, as I have already mentioned,¹ that they would be the first to enter if a monastery for discalced friars were founded for the observance of the primitive rule. Since I had no resources for acquiring a house, I did nothing but

commend the matter to our Lord. For, as I have said, I was now satisfied with these Fathers.² The Lord had indeed exercised Father Fray Antonio de Jesús in trials during the year since I had spoken with him; and he suffered them with much perfection. As for Father Fray John of the Cross, no trial was necessary. Even though he had lived among the calced friars, those of the cloth,³ he always lived a life of great perfection and religious observance. Since the Lord had given me the chief requirement for a beginning, which was friars, He was pleased to arrange the rest.

2. A gentleman from Avila, named Don Rafael,⁴ with whom I had never spoken, found out, I don't know how (for I don't remember), about my desire to make a foundation for discalced friars. He came and offered me a house he owned in a little town⁵ of very few inhabitants (I don't think even twenty, but I don't remember now). He kept the house there for an administrator who collected the revenue from his grain fields. Although I imagined how it might look, I praised our Lord and thanked this gentleman very much. He told me it was on the direct route to Medina del Campo and that since I had to pass by there to make the foundation in Valladolid I could see it. I told him I would, and indeed that is what I did. I left Avila with a nun companion and with Father Julián de Avila, the chaplain at St. Joseph's in Avila, the priest I mentioned who helped me in these travels.

3. Although we left in the morning, we got lost because we didn't know the road; and since the place is little known, we couldn't get much information about where it was. Thus, our traveling that day was very trying and the sun was very hot. When we thought we were near, we discovered we had just as far to go. I always remember the tiredness we felt and the wrong roads we took on that journey. The result was that we arrived shortly before nightfall.

When we entered the house it was in such a state that we dared not remain there that night; it wasn't at all clean and was filled with vermin. It had a fairly good entrance way, a room double in size, a loft, and a small kitchen. This was all we had for our monastery. I figured that the entrance way could serve

as the chapel, the loft as the choir, which would adapt well, and the room for sleeping.

My companion, although much better than I and very fond of penance, couldn't bear the thought of my planning to found a monastery there and said to me: "Surely, Mother, there isn't a soul, however good, that could put up with this. Don't even consider it." The Father who came with me, although he agreed with my companion, did not oppose me since I had told him my intentions.⁶ We went to spend the night in the church, although not in vigil because we were exhausted.

4. When we arrived in Medina, I spoke immediately with Father Fray Antonio, and I told him what took place and that if he would have the courage to stay there for a while, I was certain God would soon provide a remedy, and that the important thing was to begin. It seems to me I was most aware of what the Lord had done and was feeling sure, so to speak; just as I do now from what I see and even much more so because of what up till now I have seen, for at the time of my writing this there are, through the goodness of God, ten monasteries of discalced friars.⁷ And I told him he should realize that neither the provincial at that time nor the previous one would give permission—for the foundation needed their consent, as I said at the beginning—if we were seen living in a well established house.⁸ This was apart from the fact that we did not have the means for such a house. And I pointed out that in that little place and house the foundation would not attract attention. God had given him more courage than He had given me. And so Fray Antonio told me that he would be willing to live not only there but in a pigsty. Fray John of the Cross was of the same mind.

5. Now what remained was to obtain the consent of the two Fathers I mentioned because this was the condition under which our Father General granted the permission.⁹ I hoped in our Lord to obtain it, and so I told Father Fray Antonio to take care to do all he could to gather something together for this house. I went with Fray John of the Cross to the foundation of Valladolid about which I have written.¹⁰ And since we spent some days before establishing the enclosure on account of the workmen who were getting the house ready, there was an opportunity to teach

Father Fray John of the Cross about our way of life so that he would have a clear understanding of everything, whether it concerned mortification or the style of both our community life and the recreation we have together. The recreation is taken with such moderation that it only serves to reveal the Sisters' faults and to provide a little relief so that the rule may be kept in its strictness. He was so good that I, at least, could have learned much more from him than he from me. Yet this is not what I did, but I taught him about the lifestyle of the Sisters.¹¹

6. It pleased God that the provincial, Fray Alonso González, from whom I had to obtain approbation, was there. He was elderly, good natured, and without malice. I told him many things, and reminded him of the account he would have to give if he hindered a work as good as this when asked by God to carry it out. His Majesty, wanting the foundation, put him in the right disposition, for he mellowed very much. When Doña María de Mendoza and the bishop of Avila, her brother (who is the one who always favored and protected us) came, they convinced both him and Father Fray Angel de Salazar, the previous provincial, the one from whom I feared all the difficulty. Moreover, a certain need arose at the time for which the latter provincial had need of assistance from Doña María de Mendoza. This fact, I believe, helped a great deal, although even if this opportunity had not been present, our Lord would have moved the provincial's heart just as He did the heart of Father General which was anything but inclined to the idea.

7. Oh, God help me, how many obstacles I have seen in these business matters that seemed impossible to overcome, and how easy it was for His Majesty to remove them. And how ashamed I am not to be better after seeing what I have seen. For now as I am writing, I am growing fearful and want our Lord to make known to everyone how in these foundations we creatures have done next to nothing. The Lord has directed all by means of such lowly beginnings that only His Majesty could have raised the work to what it now is. May He be always blessed, amen.

Chapter 14

Continues to speak of the foundation of the first monastery of discalced Carmelite friars. For the honor and glory of God, tells something about both the kind of life lived there and the good our Lord began to do in those surroundings.

HAVING THE PERMISSION OF these two provincials, I now figured that nothing was lacking. We arranged that Father Fray John of the Cross would go to the house and get it ready so that, in spite of all, it could be lived in. For me, what was most urgent was that the friars begin, for I was very fearful lest some obstacle would come along our path. And this they did. Father Fray Antonio had already gathered some of the things necessary. Insofar as we could, we helped him; although our help amounted to little. He came to Valladolid with great happiness to speak to me and told me what he had collected, which was very little. It was only with clocks that he was well provided, for he had five of them; this greatly amused me. He told me they were meant as a help to follow the daily schedule, which he wanted well fixed; I don't think he even had any bed yet to sleep in.

2. Although they had wanted to do a great deal with the house, not much time was required to prepare it because there was no money. When it was ready, Father Fray Antonio happily renounced his priorship and promised to observe the primitive rule. Although he was told to try the new way of life first, he did not want to. He went to his little house with the greatest happiness in the world. Fray John was already there.

3. Father Fray Antonio has told me that when he first came near the little place he felt a great inner joy, and it seemed to him that he was now through with the world by leaving it all and placing himself in that solitude. Neither of the two found the house unfit; rather, it seemed to them they were living in the midst of great pleasures.

4. Oh, God help me! What little these buildings and exterior comforts do interiorly. Out of love for Him, I ask you my Sisters and Fathers, that you never fail to be very moderate in this mat-

ter of large and magnificent houses. Let us keep before us our true founders, those holy fathers from whom we descend, for we know that by means of that path of poverty and humility they now enjoy God.

5. Truly I have seen that there is more spirituality and even inner happiness when suitable accommodations for the body are seemingly lacking than afterward when the house is large and the accommodations good. What benefit is it to us that the house be large since it is only one small room that each one habitually uses? That it be well designed—what help is that to us? Indeed, if it isn't well designed, we won't then have to go around looking at the walls. By considering that the house will not be ours forever, but ours only for as short a time as this life lasts, even though that may be long, everything will be easy for us. We will see that the less we have here below, the more we will enjoy in eternity, where the dwelling places will be in conformity with the love with which we have imitated the life of our good Jesus. If we say that these are the beginning steps in order to renew the rule of the Virgin, His Mother, our Lady and Patroness, let us not be so offensive to her or to our holy fathers of the past as to fail to live as they did. Since, because of our weakness, we cannot do so in every way, in matters that are not essential for sustaining life, we must proceed very carefully. For it is all a matter of but a little effort, and that becomes delightful, as was the case with these two Fathers. And once we are determined to undergo this effort, the difficulty passes, for all the pain is but a little in the beginning.

6. On the First or Second Sunday of Advent (I don't remember which of these Sundays it was), in the year 1568, the first Mass was said in that little stable of Bethlehem, for it doesn't seem to me the house was any better.¹ The following Lent, while on my way to the foundation in Toledo, I passed by there.² When I arrived in the morning, Father Fray Antonio was sweeping the doorway to the church with that joyful expression on his face that he always has. I said to him: "What's this, my Father; what has become of your honor?" Telling me of his great happiness, he answered with these words: "I curse the day I had any."

When I entered the little church, I was astonished to see the

spirit the Lord had put there. And it wasn't only I, for the two merchants, my friends from Medina who had accompanied me there, did nothing else but weep. There were so many crosses, so many skulls! I never forget a little cross made for the holy water fount from sticks with a paper image of Christ attached to it; it inspired more devotion than if it had been something very expertly carved.

7. The choir was in the loft. In the middle of the loft the ceiling was high enough to allow for the recitation of the Hours, but one had to stoop low in order to enter and to hear Mass. There were in the two corners facing the church two little hermitages, where one could do no more than either lie down or sit. Both were filled with hay because the place was very cold, and the roof almost touched one's head. Each had a little window facing the altar and a stone for a pillow; and there, too, the crosses and skulls. I learned that after the friars finished Matins they did not leave the choir before Prime but remained there in prayer, for their prayer was so deep that when it came time to say Prime their habits were covered with snow without their having become aware of the fact. The two Fathers recited the Hours with another Father from among those of the cloth who went to stay with them (although he didn't change his habit because he was very sickly) and another young, unordained brother who was also there.³

8. They used to go preach in many of the neighboring towns where the people were left without any instructions in Christian doctrine. On this account also I rejoiced that the house had been founded there. For I had been told that there was no monastery nearby nor any place from which the people could get instructions, which was a great pity. In a short time the reputation the Fathers had was so great that I experienced the deepest consolation when I learned of it. For their preaching, as I say, they journeyed barefoot a league and a half, or two, for at that time they did not yet wear sandals (afterward they were ordered to wear them), and in much snow and cold. When finished with their preaching and confessing, they returned very late to their house for supper. In their happiness, all they did seemed small to them.

9. As for food, they had a surplus, for the people in the neighboring towns provided them with more than they needed. And some gentlemen from those towns came there to confession and offered them better houses and sites. Among those gentlemen was a Don Luis, lord of five towns.⁴ This particular gentleman had built a church to honor an image of our Lady, which was indeed worthy of being venerated. His father had sent it through a merchant from Flanders to his grandmother or mother (I don't remember which). The merchant liked it so much that he kept it for many years, and afterward at the hour of his death ordered that it be sent to Don Luis. It is a large altarpiece; I haven't seen anything better in my life—and others say the same. Father Fray Antonio went to that place at the request of this gentleman and saw the image; he liked it so much, and rightly so, that he agreed to transfer the monastery there. This town is called Mancera.⁵ Although there was no well in that place, nor did it seem that any could be found there, this gentleman built the friars a monastery, small and in keeping with their profession, and gave them furnishings. He did everything very well.

10. I don't want to fail to mention the way, considered to be miraculous, in which the Lord gave them water. One day after supper, while the prior, Father Fray Antonio, was talking in the cloister with his friars about the need for water, he rose and took a staff he was holding in his hands and made a sign of the cross on one part of it (I think he made the sign of the cross, although I don't remember well whether he did or not); but anyway he pointed with the stick and said: "Now, dig here." After they had dug only a little, so much water came out that it is now even difficult to drain the well so as to clean it. The water is very good for drinking, and all that was needed for the remaining construction work was taken from there, and never, as I say, does the well empty out. After they had enclosed a garden with a wall, they sought to get water for the garden and made a water wheel and went to much expense; up till now, they have not been able to find any more, not even a little.

11. I couldn't thank our Lord enough when I saw that little house,⁶ which shortly before was uninhabitable, with such a

spirit that everywhere I looked I found something edifying. And by the way they were living, I learned of the mortification, prayer, and good example they were giving. A gentleman and his wife, whom I knew and who lived in a nearby town, came to see me there, and they never stopped telling me about the sanctity of these Fathers and the great good they were doing in those towns. I experienced the greatest interior joy, for it seemed to me that I saw a beginning that would be of much benefit to our order and service to our Lord. May it please His Majesty that things will continue as they are now, and that my plan will indeed be realized.

The merchants who had accompanied me told me that not for all the world would they have missed having gone there. What a thing virtue is, for that poverty pleased those merchants more than all their riches, and their souls were left satisfied and comforted.

12. After conversing with those Fathers, I spoke of some things and begged them especially—since I am weak and wretched—not to be so rigorous in penitential practices, for what they were doing was severe. Since it had cost me so much in desire and prayer for the Lord to give me some friars to begin with and I saw such a good start, I feared lest the devil would attempt to put an end to this beginning before what I hoped for could be accomplished. As one who is imperfect and of little faith, I did not observe that this was God's work and that His Majesty would carry it forward. Since they engaged in practices in which I did not, they paid little attention to my words about giving them up. And thus I went away greatly consoled, although I did not give God the praise so great a favor deserved.

May it please His Majesty, in His goodness, that I be able to serve somehow for the very many things I owe Him, amen. For, indeed, I understood that this foundation was a much greater grace than the favor He granted me to found houses of nuns.

Chapter 15

Treats of the foundation of the monastery of the glorious St. Joseph made in the city of Toledo in 1569.

IN THE CITY OF TOLEDO there was a merchant, a respected man and servant of God, who never wanted to marry but lived a very good Catholic life of great trustworthiness and virtue. Through honest trade he went about increasing his wealth with the intention of using it for some work very pleasing to the Lord. He was struck with a fatal illness. His name was Martín Ramírez¹. A Father from the Society of Jesus named Pablo Hernández,² a confessor of mine when I was in Toledo arranging for the foundation of Malagón, was very eager that one of our monasteries be founded in Toledo. So he went to speak with the man and told him of the great service such a foundation would give our Lord and how the fund for chaplains and chaplaincies³ that he wanted to establish could be left for this monastery and that the certain feast days and everything else he had resolved to leave to the care of a parish in that city would be taken care of by such a monastery.

2. The merchant was so sick that he saw there was no time to make such arrangements, and he left the whole matter in the hands of his brother, whose name was Alonso Alvarez Ramírez; once this was done, God took him. The right decision had been made, for this Alonso Alvarez is a very discreet God-fearing man, truthful and charitable in almsgiving, and open-minded. As one who has had many dealings with him, I can as an eyewitness say this in all truthfulness.

3. When Martín Ramírez died, I was still involved with the foundation at Valladolid. There I received a letter from Father Pablo Hernández of the Society and from Alonso Alvarez himself, giving me an account of what had happened and advising me that if I wanted to accept this foundation I should come quickly. So, shortly after the house in Valladolid was put in order, I left for Toledo. I arrived on the eve of Our Lady of the Incarnation⁴ and went to the house of Doña Luisa, which is where I stayed at other times. She was the foundress of Malagón. I was

received with great joy, for she loves me very much. I brought with me two nuns from St. Joseph's in Avila, who were great servants of God.⁵ We were immediately given a suite of rooms, as was that lady's custom, where we remained with as much recollection as in a monastery.

4. I immediately began to take up the business matters with Alonso Alvarez and a son-in-law of his, named Diego Ortiz. The latter, although very good, and a theologian, was more unyielding in his opinion than Alonso Alvarez. He did not readily soften his demands. They began to ask for many conditions that I didn't think I could easily agree to. While engaged in these negotiations, I was looking for a house to rent so as to establish possession of the new foundation. But I was never able to find one that was suitable, although a great deal of searching had been done. Nor was I able to get the ecclesiastical administrator to give me the license (for at that time the archbishop was not there),⁶ although this lady in whose house I was staying tried hard, as did also a nobleman, a canon in this church, whose name was Don Pedro Manrique, son of the governor of Castile. Don Pedro was a very good servant of God, and still is (for he is alive, though he had poor health). Some years after this house was founded, he entered the Society of Jesus where he is now.⁷ He was an important person in this city because he is very intelligent and trustworthy. Nonetheless, he was unable to get me the license. For when the governor softened in his resistance, those on the council did not. To add to this, Alonso Alvarez and I couldn't come to an agreement because of his son-in-law to whom he gave much power. We ended up by disagreeing on everything.

5. I didn't know what to do, for I hadn't come for any other reason, and I saw that if I went away without making a foundation, the fact would be much publicized. Nonetheless, I was saddened more over their not giving me the license than by all the rest. I knew that once possession of the foundation was established, the Lord would provide as He had in other places. So I resolved to talk to the governor, and I went to a church that was next to his house and sent someone to beg him to be kind enough to speak with me. More than two months had passed in trying to obtain the license, and each day the matter got worse. When I

saw him, I told him that it was hard to accept the fact that there were women who wanted to live with so much austerity, perfection, and withdrawal from the world while those who would bear nothing of this but lived in comfort wanted to hinder these works that were of such service to our Lord. These and many other things I told him with a great determination which was given me by the Lord. The governor's heart was so moved that before I left he gave me the license.

6. I went away very happy. It seemed to me I now had everything without having anything, for I must have had only about three or four ducats. With these I bought two paintings done on canvas⁸ (for I didn't have anything with an image to put on the altar), two straw mattresses and a woolen blanket. As for the house, we forgot about it since I was not in agreement with Alonso Alvarez. A merchant in the same city, a friend of mine named Alonso de Avila⁹, who had never wanted to marry and who thinks only of doing good for those in prison—and he does many other good works as well—told me not to be afflicted, that he would find a house for me; but he took sick. Some days before, a very holy Franciscan friar named Martín de la Cruz had come to that place. He was there for some days, and when he left he sent me a young man named Andrada¹⁰ (by no means rich but very poor), asking him to do everything I told him. One day when Andrada was attending Mass in a church, he came to speak to me and tell me what he had been told by that blessed man and that he was certainly ready to do everything he could for me; although only with his personal service could he help us. I thanked him and was amused, and my companions even more so, to see the kind of help that saintly man had sent us. The clothes this young man had on were not the kind one would wear when going to speak with discalced nuns.

7. Having the license but no one who would help me, I didn't know what to do or whom to entrust with the task of seeking a house for me to rent. I remembered the young man that Fray Martín de la Cruz had sent me and mentioned him to my companions. They laughed very much at me and told me not to do such a thing, that it would serve for no more than to make the secret plan public. I didn't want to listen to them. Since he was

sent by that servant of God, I trusted that there was something for him to do and that his offer to help had a mystery about it. Thus I sent for him and told him, placing him under all the secrecy I could, what was happening and asked that with this in mind he look for a house for me and that I would provide a guarantor for the rent. The guarantor of the rent was the good Alonso de Avila who, as I mentioned,¹¹ took sick. The task seemed a very easy one to Andrada and he told me that he would look for one. Right away, the day after the next, while I was attending Mass at the house of the Society of Jesus, he came to speak to me and said that he already had the house, that he had the keys, that it was nearby and that we should go to see it. And this we did. It was so nice that we stayed in it for almost a year.¹²

8. Frequently, when I reflect on this foundation, I am amazed by the designs of God. For almost three months—at least more than two, but I don't remember exactly—very wealthy persons had made the rounds of Toledo looking for a house for us and were never able to find one, as though there were no houses in the city. And then this youth comes along, not rich but very poor, and the Lord desired that he find one immediately. And though it could have been found without trouble if an agreement had been reached with Alonso Alvarez, not only did we fail to reach one but were far from doing so. Thus in God's design the foundation had to be made in poverty and with trial.

9. Well then, since the house pleased us, I gave the order at once to take possession before anything was done in it, lest some obstacle arise. Indeed, in a short while Andrada, who was mentioned, came to tell me that the house was being vacated that day, that we should bring our furniture. I told him there was little to do, for we had nothing but two straw mattresses and a blanket. He must have been surprised. My companions regretted that I told him and said that since I had mentioned this to him and he thereby saw how poor we were, he would not want to help us. I had not thought of this, but he paid little attention to it. For the One who gave him that desire had to advance the work until it was completed. And indeed I don't think we ourselves could have done better than Andrada in preparing the

house and getting workmen. We borrowed the things necessary for saying Mass, and, in order to take possession of the house, went with a workman at nightfall; and we brought a bell that is used at the elevation of the Blessed Sacrament, for we had no other. With much fear on my part, we spent the whole night getting everything in order. There was no place for a church except in one of the rooms of another little house next to this one and occupied at the time by some women; the owner had also rented this little house to us.

10. Since we had everything ready by dawn and we had not dared say anything to the women lest they reveal what we were doing, we began to make a door through a thin partition wall which led on to a very tiny patio. When the women, still in bed, heard the pounding, they got up terrified. We had all we could do to calm them down; but it was already time for Mass, and although they were hard to deal with, they did not do us any harm. And when they saw what our intention was the Lord pacified them.

11. Afterward, I realized how poorly we had proceeded; for at the time, with the absorption God gives in the work so that it will get done, one does not think of the difficulties. Well, when the owner of the house found out that it was made into a church, the trouble began, for she was the wife of an heir to an entailed estate and was very much opposed to this. The Lord was pleased that when she learned we would buy the house if we were satisfied with it, she was appeased. But, when those on the council learned that the monastery, for which they had never wanted to give a license, was founded, they became very angry and went and complained to the canon (whom I had secretly informed), boasting to him that they would do everything in their power to destroy it. Since the ecclesiastical administrator had gone on a trip after having given me the permission and was not in the city, they went to complain to the canon I mentioned, astonished at such boldness that a useless little woman should found a monastery against their will. He pretended that he knew nothing and pacified them as best he could, telling them that she had done so in other cities and with due authorization.

12. After I don't know how many days, they sent us a notice

of excommunication so that no Mass could be said until I presented the documents giving me authorization for what was done. I answered very meekly that I would do what they ordered, although I was not obliged to obey in that matter. And I asked Don Pedro Manrique, the gentleman I mentioned,¹³ to go and speak to them and show them the documents. He appeased them since the deed was already done; otherwise, we would have been in deep trouble.

13. For some days we had no more than the straw mattresses and the blanket, and even that day we didn't have so much as a stick of wood to make a fire to cook a sardine. And I don't know who it was the Lord moved to leave a little bundle of wood in the church to help us. The nights were quite cold; but with the blanket and the woolen mantles we wore, we kept ourselves warm, for these mantles often help us. It will seem impossible that though we had stayed in the house of that lady who loved me so much,¹⁴ we had to enter the new foundation in so much poverty. I don't know the reason, except that God wanted us to experience the good that lies in this virtue. I did not ask for help, because I don't like to be a bother; and she perhaps wasn't aware. Moreover, I am indebted for what she was able to give us.

14. The experience was very good for us; the interior consolation and happiness we felt were so great that I often think about what the Lord keeps stored up within the virtues. It seems to me this lack we experienced was the cause of a sweet contemplation. But this poverty did not last long, for soon Alonso Alvarez himself as well as others were providing us with more than we needed. And, true to say, my sadness was such that it resembled that of discovering that many gold jewels in my possession were taken away and I left poor. Thus I felt sorry that they were bringing our poverty to an end, and my companions felt the same. Since I saw they were sad, I asked them what troubled them, and they answered: "What else could it be, Mother, for it no longer seems we are poor."

15. From then on my desire to be very poor increased. And I felt freedom in having so little esteem for temporal goods, for the lack of these goods brings an increase of interior good. Cer-

tainly, such a lack carries in its wake another kind of fullness and tranquility.

During those days in which I was discussing the foundation with Alonso Alvarez, there were many persons to whom the plan seemed wrong—and they told me so—since that family was not from the nobility, although the family was very good, regardless of its social status, as I have said.¹⁵ They thought that in a city as important as Toledo I would not lack comfort. I did not pay much attention to this, because, glory to God, I have always esteemed virtue more than lineage. But so much was said to the ecclesiastical administrator that he gave me the license under the condition that I make the foundation as in other places.

16. I didn't know what to do, for after the foundation was made they again took up the negotiations. But since the house was already founded, I arranged to let them become the patrons of the large chapel and settled things in such a way that they would have no connection with what pertained to the monastery, as is now the case. There was already someone who wanted the large chapel, an important person; and there were many opinions about this so that I didn't know what to decide. Our Lord desired to give me light in this matter, and so at one time He told me that lineage and social status mattered not at all in the judgment of God. He gave me a severe reprimand for listening to those who spoke to me about this; concerns of this sort were not for those of us who had already despised the world.

17. With these and other reasons I was very humbled, and I resolved to settle what had been begun and give them the chapel. I never regretted it, for we have seen clearly what poor assistance we would have received as far as buying a house goes. But with the help of Alonso Alvarez we bought a house in the place where we are now. It is one of the nicest in Toledo, and cost twelve thousand ducats. Since, according to the contract, so many Masses and feasts are to be celebrated, the nuns as well as the people are much consoled. Had I paid attention to the vain opinions of the world, it would have been impossible, from what we can understand, for us to be so well provided for, and I would have offended the one who with so much good will did this charitable deed for us.

Chapter 16

Treats of some of the things that have taken place, to the honor and glory of God, in this monastery of St. Joseph's in Toledo.

IT HAS OCCURRED TO ME to say something about what some of the nuns put into practice in the service of the Lord so that those who follow may strive to imitate the good things that were done in the beginning.

Before the house was bought, a nun named Ana de la Madre de Dios entered here at the age of forty. Her whole life had been spent in serving His Majesty. Although her house and way of life lacked no comfort because she lived alone and was well-to-do, she wanted instead to choose the poverty and submission of our order, and so she came to speak with me. Her health was poor. But since I saw she was so good and determined a soul, I thought she would be helpful for the beginning of the foundation; so I admitted her. God was pleased to give her much more health in the practice of austerity and submission than she had in her freedom and comfort.¹

2. What edified me, and the reason I am recording this here, is that before she made her profession she offered everything she owned—and she was very rich—as an alms to the house. I was not happy about this and did not want to consent, telling her that perhaps afterward either she would be sorry she entered or we might not want to admit her to profession. And I added that what she did was imprudent, although we would not have let her go without giving the money back. But I wanted to overstate the point: first, so that there would be no occasion for temptation; second, in order to test her spirit. She answered that if this were to happen she would beg for the money out of love of God. And I was unable to make her change her mind. She lived very happily and with much better health.

3. The mortification and the obedience that were practiced in this monastery were great. As a result, the several times that I was there the prioress had to be careful² about what she said. For even when she said something only casually, they would immediately carry it out. Once they were looking at a pond that

was in the garden, and she said to a nun standing nearby: "But what would happen if I were to say, 'jump in'?" Hardly was this said, and the nun was in the pond and got so soaked that she had to change her clothes. At another time, when I was present, the nuns were going to confession, and one who was waiting for the other to finish came to speak to the prioress.³ She asked her why she was doing that and if it was a good way to recollect herself and told her to go stick her head in a well that was nearby and there think of her sins. The nun thought she was to jump into the well and went so quickly to do so that if they hadn't hurried to hold her back she would have done so thinking she was doing God the greatest service in the world. Other similar things, requiring much mortification, were done. This made it necessary for learned men to restrain the nuns and explain to them the matters in which they were obliged to obey. For these nuns did some things that were imprudent, so that if their good intention had not redeemed them, they would have lost rather than gained merit. The above is true not only of this monastery, but it occurred to me to speak of the matter here. Rather, in all the others there are so many things happening that I wish I had not a part in them so that I could freely tell about some of them for the praise of our Lord in His servants.

4. It happened that while I was here a fatal illness struck one of the Sisters. After receiving the sacraments and being anointed, her happiness and joy were so great that, as though she were going to another country, we were able to talk to her about how she should recommend us to God when in heaven and to the saints to whom we were devoted. A little before she died, I went to her room to be with her, for I had just gone before the Blessed Sacrament to beg the Lord to give her a good death. And when I entered I saw His Majesty at the head of the bed. His arms were partly opened as though He were protecting her, and He told me that I could be certain He would protect all the nuns that die in these monasteries and that they should not fear temptation at the hour of death. I was left very consoled and recollected. After a little while I began to speak to her, and she said to me: "O Mother, what great things I am going to see." Thus she died, like an angel.⁴

5. And I have noticed that some who have died since this occurred have done so with quiet and calm as though they were in rapture or in the prayer of quiet, without showing the least sign of any temptation. Thus I hope in the goodness of God that He will be merciful to us at the moment of death through the merits of His Son and those of His glorious Mother whose habit we wear. Therefore, my daughters, let us strive to be true Carmelites, for soon the day's journey will end. And if we were to know the affliction that many experience at the hour of death and the cunning deceit with which the devil tempts them, we would highly esteem this favor.

6. One thing occurs to me now that I want to tell you, for I knew the person, and indeed he was almost a relative of my relatives. He was a great gambler, who had taken some theology by which the devil tried to deceive him, making him believe that the purpose of amendment at the hour of death was worth nothing. He had this so fixed in his mind that others could in no way get him to confess. Nor did anything suffice, though the poor man was extremely afflicted and repentant of the evil life he had lived. But he asked why he should confess since he saw that he was condemned. A learned Dominican friar who was his confessor did nothing but argue with him, but the devil taught him so many subtleties that the friar's arguments were insufficient. Thus for some days the confessor didn't know what to do; and, along with others, he must have recommended the matter urgently to the Lord since he had compassion on the man.

7. When the illness, which involved pain in the side, was beginning to afflict the man greatly, the confessor returned. He must have thought up other arguments, but they would have been of little benefit if the Lord had not taken pity on that man and softened his heart. And when the confessor began to speak to him and give him reasons, the man sat up in bed as though he were not sick at all and said to him: "What, in short, do you have to say that could help me benefit from my confession? For I want to make it." And he sent for a secretary or notary (I don't remember which) to record his testimony, and made a very solemn oath not to gamble any more and to amend his life. He confessed very well and received the sacraments with such devotion that from what we can understand according to our faith he was

saved. May Our Lord be pleased, Sisters, that we live our lives as true daughters of the Blessed Virgin and keep our vows so that He may grant us the favor He has promised us. Amen.

Chapter 17

Treats of the foundation of the two monasteries in Pastrana, one for the nuns and one for the friars. They were made in 1570, I mean 1569.

AFTER THE FOUNDATION OF THE HOUSE IN TOLEDO, during the fifteen days preceding Pentecost, the little church, the grates, and other things had to be prepared. There was a great deal to do, for as I have said we remained in this house for almost a year. I was tired after those days from going about with the workmen. When the vigil of Pentecost came, all the work was done. That morning as we sat in the refectory to eat, great consolation came over me in seeing that I no longer had anything to do and that I could enjoy some time with the Lord on Pentecost; I was almost unable to eat so consoled did my soul feel.¹

2. I did not deserve to have this consolation very long, for while I was in the midst of it, they came to tell me that a servant sent by the princess of Eboli, the wife of Ruy Gómez de Silva, was there. I went to meet him and learned that the princess was sending him for me since I had been in communication with her for some time about the foundation of a monastery in Pastrana. I didn't think it was to come about so quickly. The idea made me uneasy because it would have been dangerous to leave a monastery founded so recently and in the midst of opposition. So I resolved not to go, and said so. The servant told me that this would not be acceptable, because the princess was already in Pastrana and had not gone for any other reason, that she would take a refusal as an insult. Despite all this, I had no thought of going, and so I told him to go get something to eat and that I would write to the princess; and then he left. He was a very honorable man, and though he did not like it that I refused, once I explained the reasons to him, he went along with them.

3. Moreover, the nuns who were to make up the new community had just arrived, another reason why I did not see how I could leave so soon.² I went before the Blessed Sacrament to beg the Lord to help me write in such a way that the princess would not grow angry. That would have been very bad for us since the friars were then just beginning and, above all, it was good to keep in the favor of Ruy Gómez who had such strong influence with the king and with everyone. But I don't remember if I recalled the latter, although I know well that I did not want to displease Ruy Gómez.³ While I was praying to the Lord, He told me not to fail to go, that I was going for more than that foundation and that I should bring the rule and constitutions.

4. Since I heard this—although for myself I saw serious reasons for not going—I didn't dare but do what I usually do in similar instances, which was to follow the counsel of my confessor. And so I sent for him. I did not tell him what I had heard in prayer.⁴ In this way I am always left more satisfied, for I beg the Lord to give my confessors light in conformity with what they can know naturally. And when His Majesty wants something to be done, He puts it in their heart. This has happened to me many times. So it happened this time, for after considering everything, he thought I should go, and with that I decided to leave.

5. I set out from Toledo the second day after Pentecost traveling by way of Madrid. There my companions and I went for lodging to a monastery of Franciscan nuns, with a lady, who had founded it and lived in it, named Doña Leonor Mascareñas.⁵ She had been the king's governess and is a very good servant of our Lord. I had lodged there at other times when on certain occasions I had to pass by, and she always showed me much kindness.

6. This lady told me she was happy I had come at that time because a hermit was there who eagerly desired to meet me⁶ and that it seemed to her the life he and his companions were living was very similar to that of our rule. The thought came to me that if this were so it would be a good thing since I had only two friars, and so I begged her to arrange for us to speak. He was staying in a room given him by this lady. He was there with another young brother named Fray Juan de la Miseria, a great servant of

God and very simple with regard to the things of the world.⁷ While we were speaking together, this hermit told me that he wanted to go to Rome.

7. Before going on, I want to mention what I know about this Father, named Mariano de San Benito. He was Italian, a doctor, and very intelligent and talented. While he was living as the supervisor of the entire household of the queen of Poland, our Lord called him to leave all so as to better obtain his salvation. He had not been inclined to marry, but was a knight of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. He had undergone some trials in which he had been falsely accused of being involved in a man's death and thus put in prison for two years. While there, he didn't want to be defended by any learned man or anyone else, but only by God and His justice, for there were witnesses who said that he had ordered them to kill the man. Resembling the old men in the story about Saint Susanna,⁸ when each was asked where the accused was at the time, one said that he was seated on a bed; and the other, at a window. In the end they confessed to having calumniated him. And he assured me that he had spent much money to free them so that they would not be punished, and that certain information had come into his possession against the one who had caused him the trouble and that he likewise did as much as he could not to do that one any harm.

8. Through these and other virtues—for he is a clean-living and chaste man, unwilling to have any dealings with women—he must have merited from our Lord knowledge of what the world is so that he would strive to withdraw from it. And thus he began to think about which religious order to join. And, from what he told me, in thinking about the different orders, he found in each one some difficulty for his temperament. He learned that near Seville some hermits had come together to live in a desert called El Tardón, under a very holy man, named Padre Mateo,⁹ whom they took as their superior. Each one lived apart in a cell. They did not recite the divine office together but did gather in an oratory for Mass. They had no fixed income; neither did they want to receive alms, nor did they. But they supported themselves by the work of their hands, and each one ate alone and very poorly. When I heard about this, it seemed

to me to be a living picture of the life of our own holy fathers. Father Mariano had spent eight years in this manner of life. When the holy Council of Trent came and took away authorization for the eremitical life, he wanted to go to Rome to seek permission that they might continue as they were, and this was his intention when I spoke to him.¹⁰

9. Well now, when he told me the manner of his life, I showed him our primitive rule and told him that without so much trouble he could observe all of that since his life was the same as that prescribed in the rule, especially living by the work of one's hands. He was very much inclined to the latter and told me that the world was lost because of greed and that this was why religious life was not valued. Since I felt the same, we quickly agreed in this and even in everything else. When I gave him reasons about how much he could serve God in this habit, he told me that he would think over the matter that night. I already saw that he was nearly decided, and I understood that what I had learned in prayer (that I was going to Pastrana for more than the foundation of a monastery of nuns)¹¹ referred to this. The thought gave me the greatest happiness since it seemed to me that the Lord would be much served if this hermit were to enter the order. He was so moved that night by His Majesty, who desired this, that the next day he called for me, now very determined and even very surprised to see how quickly he himself had changed, especially through the instrumentality of a woman, for even now he sometimes mentions this to me, as though what I said were the cause and not the Lord who can change hearts.

10. Great are God's judgments. Mariano had gone many years without knowing what to decide concerning his state, for the life he had been living was not that of a religious, since the hermits did not make vows or take on any obligation other than to remain there in solitude. And God quickly moved him and revealed how much His Majesty would be served by him in this state and the need for him in order to carry on what had been begun. For he has helped a great deal, and up to now it has cost him many trials. And by what can be seen from the opposition the followers of this primitive rule now experience,¹² the work will cost him more until it is firmly established. For through his

talent, intelligence, and good life he is influential with many persons who favor and defend us.

11. Well then, he told me how Ruy Gómez had given him a good hermitage and site in Pastrana, the place where I was going, for a settlement of hermits and that he wanted to accept it for this order and receive the habit. I thanked him and praised our Lord greatly. For of the two monasteries for which our Most Reverend Father General had sent permission, only one had been founded.¹³ From there I sent a message to the two Fathers that were mentioned, the present provincial and the previous one,¹⁴ begging them to give me permission since the monastery could not be founded without their consent. And I wrote to the bishop of Avila, Don Alvaro de Mendoza, who was very favorable toward us, to try to get them to grant it.

12. God was pleased that they look favorably on my request. It seemed to them that in a place so isolated the foundation could do them little harm. Mariano gave me his word that he would go there when the permission came. Thus, I was extremely happy. Once there, I met the princess and the prince, Ruy Gómez, who received me very cordially. They gave us a separate apartment, where we stayed longer than I had expected. For the house where we were to live was so small that the princess had ordered much of it to be torn down and many things built anew, but not the walls.

13. I spent three months¹⁵ there during which many trials were suffered, since the princess asked me to do things that were not fitting for our form of religious life, and so I decided, rather than make the foundation, to leave. The prince, Ruy Gómez, with both his common sense, which was very great, and his reasonableness, got his wife to agree with us. And I bore with some things because I was more desirous that the monastery of friars be founded than that of the nuns. I knew how important this was, and the importance afterward became clear.

14. At this time Mariano with his companion (the two hermits that were mentioned)¹⁶ came, and when the permission arrived, the prince and princess were glad to agree that the hermitage they had given him for hermits be used by discalced friars. I sent

for Father Fray Antonio de Jesús, who was the first discalced and was in Mancera so that he might get the foundation started. I made habits and white mantles and did all I could so that they might take the habit at once.

15. At this time I had sent to Medina del Campo for more nuns, for I had brought only two with me. There was a Father in Medina, about middle-aged, not too old, not too young, and a very good preacher, whose name was Baltasar de Jesús.¹⁷ Since he knew that the monastery was being founded, he came with the nuns and desired to become a discalced. This he did after he arrived, and when he told me, I praised God. He gave the habit to Father Mariano and his companion. Both of them became lay brothers, for Father Mariano did not want to become a priest, but wanted to be the least of all; nor could I convince him otherwise. Afterward, by order of our Most Reverend Father General, he was ordained a priest.¹⁸ Once the two monasteries were established and Father Fray Antonio de Jesús had come, novices began to enter, of whom I shall give some examples later on. And they began to serve our Lord so authentically that, if He be pleased, someone more capable than I of telling about it, will put it in writing. For such a task, I would fall short.

16. As for the nuns, the monastery there received much kindness from the prince and princess. And the princess favored them and treated them well until the prince, Ruy Gómez, died.¹⁹ Tempted by the devil, or perhaps because the Lord permitted it—His Majesty knows why—the princess in the intense emotion felt from her husband's death entered to be a nun. With the affliction she was experiencing, the practices of enclosure to which she was not accustomed could only displease her, and because of the holy Council the prioress could not give the liberties the princess wanted.

17. The princess came to dislike both the prioress and all the rest of the nuns along with her. Such was her dislike that even after she discarded the habit and lived in her own house she caused them trouble. And the poor nuns were so disturbed that I strove in every way I could, begging the superiors, to move the monastery from there and found one in Segovia. As will be said later,²⁰ they did move to Segovia, and left behind all that the

princess had given them, but brought along some nuns she had ordered them to accept without any dowry. The beds and other little things that the nuns had brought there with them they also took along. Their departure left the townspeople very sorry. As for me, seeing the nuns in peace left me with the greatest happiness in the world. For I was very well informed that they were in no way at fault for the displeasure of the princess. On the contrary, they served her as much when she had the habit as they did before she received it. The only occasion for her displeasure was the one I mentioned²¹ plus the hardship both she and the servant she had brought with her experienced. For, from what is known, she was entirely at fault. In sum, the Lord permitted it. He must have seen that it was not proper for that monastery to be there, for His judgments are great and beyond all our understanding. I, on my own account, would not dare do anything without consulting learned and holy persons.

Chapter 18

Treats of the foundation of the monastery of St. Joseph in Salamanca in the year 1570. Deals with some important counsels for prioresses.

AFTER THESE TWO FOUNDATIONS WERE MADE, I returned to the city of Toledo, where I remained some months until the house, which I mentioned, was bought and everything was left in order.¹ While I was engaged in these things, a rector of the Society of Jesus wrote me from Salamanca, telling me that it would be very good to have one of these monasteries there, giving me reasons for this.² But since the town was very poor, I resisted founding a monastery there in poverty.³ In considering that Avila is just as poor, and the monastery there is never in want, nor do I believe that God will fail those who serve Him, if they live as moderately as we do, and that the nuns are so few and help themselves through the labor of their hands, I decided to make the foundation. And going from Toledo to Avila, I sought there to obtain permission from the bishop who was then . . .⁴ Since the Father Rector had informed him about our order and

that the foundation would render service to God, he responded very favorably and gave the permission without delay.

2. It seemed to me that once I had permission from the ordinary, the monastery was as much as founded, so easy did the rest seem to me. Thus, I immediately sought to rent a house that a lady, whom I knew,⁵ would let me have. But this was a difficult thing to do because the time was not the proper one for renting and the student occupants agreed to leave only when the new occupants arrived. They did not know who the new ones would be, for I took the greatest care so that nothing would be known until I took possession of the foundation. I already have experience of what the devil stirs up to hinder one of these monasteries. And although with this one God, desiring it to be founded, did not allow him to cause trouble in the beginning, the trials and contradictions were so great afterward that they are still not completely overcome—and some years have passed between the time it was founded and my writing this account.⁶ Thus, I believe that God is served very much in it since the devil cannot bear it.

3. Well now, having obtained the permission and being certain of a house to rent, I left for Salamanca. I trusted in the mercy of God because there wasn't a person there who could in any way help me with the great deal that had to be done in order to make the proper adaptations in the house. For the sake of secrecy, I took with me only one other nun as companion,⁷ for I found this to be better than bringing the nuns before taking possession. I had learned from experience through what had happened to me in Medina del Campo; there I got myself into much trouble.⁸ Thus, if there were some obstacle, I could undergo the trial alone, with no one other than the one required companion. We arrived on the vigil of All Saints.⁹ The previous night we had travelled a good deal before coming to a place to sleep. The weather was cold; and I, very sick.

4. I am not recording in these foundations the great hardships endured in the traveling: the cold, the heat, the snow (once it didn't stop snowing the whole day); sometimes getting lost, and at other times, being very sick and having a fever (for, glory to God, I usually have poor health). But I saw clearly that

our Lord was giving me strength. It happened to me at times when a foundation was being planned that I would be so sick and have so many pains that I would get very anxious. It seemed to me that I wasn't even able to remain in my cell without lying down. I would turn to our Lord, complain to His Majesty, and ask how He desired me to do what I couldn't. Afterward, although I still felt the hardship, His Majesty gave me strength, and with the fervor and solicitude he gave, it seems I forgot about myself.

5. From what I now remember, fear of the hardship involved never prevented me from making a foundation even though I felt strong aversion to the traveling, especially the long journeys. But once we got started, the journey seemed easy to me, and I considered for whose service it was made and reflected that in that house the Lord would be praised and the Blessed Sacrament reserved. This is a special consolation for me: to see one more church, particularly when I recall the many that the Lutherans are suppressing. I don't know what trials, however great, should be feared if in exchange something so good comes about for Christianity. For although we often do not take note, it ought to be a great consolation for us that Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is present in the most Blessed Sacrament in many places. Certainly I am very often consoled in the choir when I see these very pure souls praising God, for one cannot help but recognize their holiness in many things, seeing their obedience, the joy so much enclosure and solitude give them, and their happiness when some opportunities for mortification come along. In places where the Lord gives the prioress more grace in exercising them in mortification, I see greater happiness. And the result is that the prioresses tire more easily in thus exercising them than these souls do in obeying, for never in this matter of mortification do the desires of these nuns cease.

6. Although this subject is foreign to the one concerning the foundation that I began discussing, some things are coming to my mind now about this matter of mortification. Perhaps, daughters, they will be important for the prioresses, and so lest I forget I'll mention them now. For since the prioresses have different talents and virtues, they seek to lead their nuns along

their own way. The one who is very mortified thinks that anything she commands is easy to submit to, as it would be for her, but perhaps it would be very harmful for the nun to whom she gives the orders. We must be careful about this. If for ourselves something would be harsh, we must not order others to do it. Discretion is an important aspect of government, and very necessary in these houses. I would say much more necessary than in other houses, for the account one must render concerning one's subjects is greater. This applies in interior as well as exterior matters.

Other prioresses, who are very spiritual, would like to reduce everything to prayer; in sum, the Lord leads souls by different paths. But the prioresses must remember that they are not there for the purpose of choosing a path for others according to their own liking but so as to lead subjects by the path of the rule and constitutions even though they themselves might desire and feel urged to do something else.

7. Once I was living in one of these houses with a prioress who was fond of penance; she led all the others along this path. She once had the entire community take the discipline while reciting the seven penitential psalms with their accompanying prayers, and things of this sort. Thus it happens that if a prioress is absorbed in prayer, even though the hour is not one set apart for prayer, but after Matins, she keeps the whole community there even though it would be much better if the Sisters went to bed. If, as I say, she is fond of mortification, everyone has to follow suit, and these little sheep of the Virgin keep silent like little lambs; as for me, certainly, it causes much devotion, and embarrassment, and, at times, much temptation. The Sisters don't understand, for they are all absorbed in God. But I fear for their health and would want them to observe the rule, for with that there is plenty to do; and the rest should be done with gentleness. This is especially important in what pertains to mortification. For love of our Lord, the prioresses should be attentive in this, for discretion and knowledge of each one's talents are very important in these matters. If the prioresses are not carefully attentive, they will do the nuns much harm and leave them disturbed instead of helping them.

8. They must reflect that this mortification is not a matter of obligation; this is the first thing they must consider. Although mortification is very necessary in order that the soul gain freedom and high perfection, it is not accomplished in a short time. Rather, little by little, the prioress should help each one according to the spirituality and amount of intelligence God gives. It might seem to prioresses that intelligence is not necessary for this mortification, but they are mistaken. For with some nuns, much time will pass before they come to understand perfection and even the spirit of our rule (and perhaps they will afterward be the holiest), for they will not know when it is good to excuse oneself, and when not, or other trifling matters that if they understood they would perhaps carry out with ease. And such nuns do not completely understand, nor does it seem to them that these are matters pertaining to perfection, which is worse.

9. There is a nun in one of these houses who is among the best servants of God in them, insofar as I can tell. She has a deep spirituality, receives favors from His Majesty, and has a spirit of penance and humility; yet, she does not completely understand some points in the constitutions. The accusation of faults in chapter¹⁰ seems to her uncharitable, and she wonders how anyone can say anything against the Sisters and similar things and says that she could say some things against some Sisters who are very good servants of God; and in other matters I see that she is ahead of those who understand this well. The prioress must not then think that she understands a soul at once. Let her leave this to God, for it is He alone who can understand it. Rather, the prioress should strive to guide each nun along the way His Majesty is leading that one, provided that the nun is not failing in obedience or in the more essential matters of the rule and constitutions. That virgin martyr, from the eleven thousand, who hid herself did not fail to be a saint; on the contrary, by coming alone afterward to offer herself to be martyred, she perhaps suffered more than the rest of the virgins.¹¹

10. Now, then, let us return to the subject of mortification. The prioress may ask something of a nun in order to mortify her, and although it is a little thing it may be a heavy burden to the nun. And even though the Sister does it, she is left so dis-

turbed and tempted that it would have been better had she not been told to do it; I mean, to do it right away. The prioress should take heed not to try to make such a one perfect by force but should allow her to proceed gradually until the Lord does the work in her. For that which is done to help her advance shouldn't be for her a cause of disturbance and spiritual distress, which is a very terrible thing, for she will be a very good nun without that perfection. Observing the others, she will gradually do as they do, as we have seen. And if she doesn't, she will be saved without this virtue of mortification. For I know one of these nuns who all her life practiced great virtue, and for some years now has served our Lord in many ways, and she often experiences some feelings and imperfections that she cannot do anything about, and she complained about them to me and is aware of them. I think that God allows her to fall into these sinless faults (for there is no sin in them) so that she might humble herself and realize that she is not totally perfect.

Therefore, some nuns will suffer great mortifications, and the greater the mortifications they are ordered to perform the more they will enjoy them because the Lord has given them the strength of soul to surrender their wills. Others will not suffer even little ones; and to impose mortifications on them would be comparable to loading a child down with two sacks of wheat. Not only will the child be unable to carry them, but he will bow under the weight and fall to the ground. Therefore, my daughters—I am speaking with prioresses—pardon me, for the things I have seen that happen to some make me to go on at greater length in this matter.

11. Another counsel I give you, and it is a very important one. Do not give any order that could be a sin (even venial) if carried out, and not even if you do so just to test obedience. (I've heard that some things would have involved mortal sin if done.) At least the nuns, because of their innocence perhaps, are without blame; but not the prioress, because there is no order she gives that they will not carry out immediately. And since they hear and read about what the saints of the desert did, everything seems to them well done if ordered by obedience, at least in their own case. And also let subjects be advised that anything

that would be a mortal sin when not ordered by the superior would still be one if the superior orders it, unless the matter involves omitting Mass or the Church fast, or things like that, in which the prioress may have reasons for dispensing. But something like jumping into the well and things of that sort are wrong to do. No one should think that God must work miracles, as He did with the saints; there are many other things in which perfect obedience may be practiced.

12. All the mortification in which these dangers are not present, I praise. Once a Sister in Malagón asked permission to take a discipline, and the prioress (she must have been asked more than once) answered: "Don't bother me." Since the nun persisted, the prioress said: "Go on, keep walking; don't bother me." With great simplicity, the nun went walking for several hours until another Sister asked her why she was walking so much, or something like that. And she replied that she had been ordered to do so. When the bell was rung for Matins and the prioress asked where she was, the other nun told her what had taken place.

13. Thus it's necessary, as I have mentioned at another time, that the prioresses be careful about what they do with souls that they see are so obedient. For another Sister showed a nun one of those very large worms, telling her to observe how pretty it was. The prioress said to the nun jokingly, well, let Sister eat it. The Sister went and fried it very well. The cook asked her why she was frying it. She told her she was frying it so that she could eat it, and this she wanted to do. And the prioress, being very careless, could have done her much harm. I find I'm happier that they go to excess in matters of obedience because I am particularly devoted to this virtue, and so I have put down all I could so that the nuns might possess it. But it would profit me little to do so if the Lord through His supreme mercy had not given the grace for all in general to be inclined toward this virtue. May it please His Majesty to continue to give this grace long into the future. Amen.

Chapter 19

Continues the account of the foundation of the monastery of St. Joseph in the city of Salamanca.

I HAVE DIGRESSED MUCH. When something presents itself that by the Lord's will I come to understand through experience, it bothers me not to give advice about it. It could be that what I think about the matter is worthwhile. Always inquire, daughters, from those who are learned, for through them you will learn how to advance along the way of perfection with discretion and in truth. If prioresses want to fulfill their duties well, they have great need to go to confession to a learned man (and if they don't, they will make many mistakes in the interests of sanctity); and they should strive also that their nuns confess to a learned man.

2. Well, on the vigil of All Saints, in the year that was mentioned,¹ we arrived at noon in the city of Salamanca. From an inn I sought to find out through a good man there if the house was free. He was a great servant of God, named Nicolás Gutiérrez,² to whom I had entrusted the task of making sure that it would be unoccupied. This man had won from His Majesty through his good life a great peace and happiness in the midst of trials, for he had undergone many trials. Having once enjoyed great prosperity, he was left very poor, but he bore the poverty with as much joy as he did the riches. The good man worked very hard for this foundation, with much dedication and willingness. When he came, he told me that the house was occupied, that he hadn't been able to get the students to leave. I told him how important it was that they vacate immediately, before my presence in that city became known, for I am always afraid lest some obstacle arise, as I have said.³ He went to the one who owned the house and insisted so much that it was vacated that afternoon. When it was almost night, we entered.

3. It was the first monastery I founded without reserving the Blessed Sacrament, for I had previously thought that a foundation was not official until the Blessed Sacrament was reserved. And I had now learned that this wasn't necessary. That was a

great consolation to me, for the house was in bad condition because of those students who had previously occupied it. Since they must not have had a gift for cleanliness, the whole house was in such a state that we did no small amount of work that night. The next morning the first Mass was said, and I arranged for more nuns to come from Medina del Campo.⁴ My companion and I spent the night of All Saints alone. I tell you, daughters, I have to laugh when I recall the fear of my companion, who was María del Sacramento, a nun older than I and a great servant of God.⁵

4. The house was very large, was in a mess, and had many garrets. My companion couldn't get the students out of her mind, thinking that since they were so angry for having had to leave the house, one of them may have hidden there. They could have done this very easily, for there were many possibilities. We locked ourselves in a room where there was some straw, which was the first thing I provided for the founding of the house, because in having straw we would have a bed. We slept there that night with two borrowed blankets. The next day some nuns that were nearby, who we thought would be very displeased, lent us furnishings for our companions, who were to come, and sent us alms.⁶ Their monastery was called St. Isabel's, and all the time we were there they gave us alms and did many favors for us.

5. Once my companion was locked in that room, it seems she calmed down a little with regard to the students, although she didn't do anything but look about from side to side, still fearful. And the devil must have helped by bringing to her mind thoughts about the danger. Her thoughts then began to disturb me, for with my weak heart, not much was needed. I asked her why she was looking around since no one could get in there. She answered: "Mother, I was wondering what would happen if I were to die now; what would you do here all alone?" If that had happened it would have been a hard thing for me to take. And I began to think a little about it and even become afraid. Because as for dead bodies, although I am not afraid of them, my heart gets weak even when I'm not alone. And since the tolling of the bells helped matters along, for, as I said, it was the vigil of All

Souls,⁷ the devil had a good means of making us squander our thoughts on trifles. When he sees that one has no fear of him, he looks for other devices. I said to her: "Sister, when this happens, I'll think about what to do; now, let me sleep." Since we had just spent two bad nights, sleep came soon and took away our fears. The next day more nuns arrived, and with them present, the fears left.

6. The monastery was in this house for about three years—I don't recall whether or not it was four, for I don't remember well since they sent me to the Incarnation in Avila.⁸ I never would, or did, leave any monastery until it was in fit condition, had a spirit of recollection, and was adapted according to my wishes. In this matter God greatly favors me, for when there was question of work to be done I enjoyed being the first. And as though I were to live in that house for the rest of my life, I sought to obtain everything, even the smallest thing that would contribute to the tranquility suitable for the life, and so it gave me great happiness to see that everything was in good shape. I very much regretted to see what these Sisters suffered, although not from a lack of sustenance (I took care of this from where I was, for the house was not located in a place suitable for receiving alms), but from a location that was unhealthy because of the humidity and cold. Since it was so large a house it could not be repaired. And, what was worse, the Blessed Sacrament was not reserved, which is a great affliction when so much enclosure is practiced. The Sisters were not unhappy but bore everything with a joy that moved one to praise God. Some told me that they thought it would be an imperfection to desire a house, that they were as happy there as they would be if they had the Blessed Sacrament.

7. Well, when the superior⁹ saw their perfection and the trial they were undergoing, he was moved with pity and ordered me to come from the Incarnation. They had already reached an agreement with a gentleman there who was going to sell them a house.¹⁰ But it was in such condition that they would have had to spend a thousand ducats before entering it. It belonged to an entailed estate, but the gentleman decided to allow us both to occupy it without first obtaining permission from the king and

to put up partition walls. I got Father Julián de Avila,¹¹ who is the one I said came with me on these foundations, and we looked at the house so as to decide what had to be done, for experience has taught me much about these things.

8. We went in August and hurried as much as we could. The nuns were able to stay where they were until the feast of St. Michael, the time when houses were rented there. But the house was still far from being finished. Since we had not rented for another year, the one in which we were staying had another renter already. We were in a great hurry. The whitewashing of the church was about finished. The gentleman who had sold us the house was not there. Some persons who wished us well told us that we had done wrong in coming so soon, but where there is need one takes poorly any advice that doesn't provide some help.

9. We moved on the eve of St. Michael, a little before dawn. The news had already been spread that the Blessed Sacrament would be reserved on the feast of St. Michael and that a sermon would be preached.¹² Our Lord was pleased that on the afternoon of the day we moved it rained so hard that it was most difficult to bring the things we needed. The chapel had been newly fixed up, but the roof was so poorly tiled the rain came through most of it. I tell you, daughters, I felt very imperfect that day. Since the news had already been spread about, I didn't know what to do. I became so distressed that I said to the Lord, almost complaining, that either He not order me to get involved in repair works or He help me in this need. The good man Nicolás Gutiérrez, with his equanimity, as though nothing had happened, told me very meekly not to be disturbed, that God would provide a remedy. And so it happened. On the feast of St. Michael, when it was time for the people to come, the sun began to shine, which filled me with devotion, and I saw how much better that blessed man had done by trusting in our Lord than I with my disturbance.

10. There were many people, and there was music, and the Blessed Sacrament was reserved with great solemnity. Since this house is in a good location, the people began to know about it and be devoted to it. In particular, the countess of Monterrey,

Doña María Pimentel,¹³ favored us, as well as a lady, whose husband was the magistrate there, whose name was Doña Mariana. The very next day, as though to temper our happiness in having the Blessed Sacrament, the gentleman to whom the house belonged came. He was so furious that I didn't know what to do with him. And the devil made sure that he couldn't be reasoned with, for we had fulfilled all that we had agreed upon with him. There was little use in trying to explain to him. When some other persons spoke to him, he was a little appeased; but afterward he changed his mind again. I had already decided to leave the house. He didn't want this either, because he wanted to be given the money at once. His wife to whom the house belonged had desired to sell it in order to provide for two daughters, and this was the reason given in asking for the license to sell it. The money had already been deposited with a person chosen by the husband.

11. The fact is that even though this happened more than three years ago, the purchase of the house is not finalized, nor do I know whether the monastery will remain there; and this is why I have mentioned these things.¹⁴

12. What I do know is that in none of the monasteries of the primitive rule that up to now the Lord has founded did the nuns come near to suffering trials as great as these. Through the mercy of God, those who are there are so good, for they bear everything happily. May it please His Majesty to lead them on, for whether or not they have a good house matters little. Rather, it gives us great pleasure to find we are in a house that we can be thrown out of, for we remember how the Lord of the world didn't have any. It has happened to us at times in these foundations that we were in a house that we didn't own, and the truth is that I never saw a nun distressed about that. May it please His Majesty that through His infinite goodness and mercy we will not be in want of the eternal dwelling places, amen, amen.

Chapter 20

Treats of the foundation of the monastery, Our Lady of the Annunciation, in Alba de Tormes. It was made in the year 1571.

TWO MONTHS HAD NOT YET PASSED since the feast of All Saints (the day on which possession was taken of the house in Salamanca) when I received an urgent request from the administrator for the duke of Alba and his wife that a monastery be founded in the town of Alba. I was not too keen about the idea because the town was a small one, which would make it necessary for us to have an income, and my inclination was not to have one. Father Master Fray Domingo Báñez (who had been my confessor, whom I consulted when beginning these foundations) happened to be in Salamanca, and he reprimanded me and told me that since the Council had given permission it would not be right to forego the foundation of a monastery because of a need for an income.¹ He said further that I failed to understand that whether the monastery had an income or not made little difference in regard to nuns being poor and very perfect.

Before I say more, I shall mention who the foundress was and how the Lord moved her to make the foundation.

2. The foundress of the monastery, Our Lady of the Annunciation, was Teresa de Layz, a daughter of noble parents, hidalgos of pure blood.² Since her parents were not as rich as would be expected considering the nobility of their lineage, they had their house in a place called Tordillos, which is two leagues from the said town of Alba. It is a great pity that the world is so influenced by vanity that people would prefer to remain in these little villages where there is a lack of Christian doctrine and of many other things that are means to the enlightenment of souls, than to fail even one iota in those punctilios that accompany what they call honor. Since the parents already had four daughters when Teresa de Layz was born, they were much distressed to see that she also was a daughter.

3. Certainly, it is something to be much wept over that human beings do not know what is best for them and are totally

ignorant of the judgments of God and of the great blessings that can come to them through daughters or of the great sufferings that can come from sons. It doesn't seem they want to leave this matter to the One who creates their children and understands everything, but they kill themselves over what should be making them happy. As people whose faith is asleep, they do not reflect or recall that it is God who thus ordains, and so they do not leave everything in His hands. And being so blind that they do not do this, they suffer great ignorance in not understanding how little these afflictions help them. Oh, God help me! How differently will we understand these ignorances on the day when the truth about all things shall be understood. And how many fathers and mothers will be seen going to hell because they had sons and also how many will be seen in heaven because of their daughters.

4. Well, to return to what I was saying, things came to the point that on the third day after her birth they left their baby girl alone and forgot about her for the entire day, from morning until night, as though she mattered little to them. One thing they had done well was to have her baptized by a priest as soon as she was born. When at night, a woman came who was taking care of the baby and knew what was going on, she hastened to see if the child was dead. Some other persons who had gone there to visit the mother were also witnesses to what I shall now tell. Weeping, the woman took the baby into her arms and complaining of the cruelty said: "How is it, my daughter, are you not a Christian?" The baby girl lifted her head and answered, "Yes, I am," and spoke no more until reaching that age at which all children begin to speak. Those who heard her were amazed, and her mother began to love and cherish her from then on, and she often said that she would like to live to see what God would do with this child. She reared her daughter in keeping with high moral standards and taught her everything about virtue.

5. When the time came that her parents wanted her to marry, she refused, nor did she have any desire at all to get married. She happened to find out that Francisco Velázquez, now her husband, who is also the founder of this house, was seeking her. In hearing his name, she decided to marry if she could marry him, never having seen him in her life. But His Majesty saw that

this was fitting so that the good work both of them did in order to serve Him could be done. Besides being a virtuous and rich man, Francisco Velázquez loves his wife so much that he seeks to please her in everything. And rightly so, for all that one can seek in a married woman the Lord gave to him in great abundance. Along with the diligent care she takes of her household, her goodness is so great that when her husband brought her to his native town of Alba and the duke's housing administrators happened to arrange that lodging be given in her house to a young gentleman, she was very upset and began to abhor the town.

For being youthful and attractive in appearance, she could have been the victim of some evil deed since the devil began to put bad thoughts in that gentleman's mind.

6. Aware of this, but without saying anything to her husband, she asked him to take her away from there. He did so and brought her to Salamanca where she lived very happily, surrounded by much of the world's goods, since he held a position that made others want to please and flatter him.³ They had but one sorrow, that God had not given them children. That He might give them, she offered many devotions and prayers. And she never begged the Lord for anything else but that He give her offspring so that after her death her children could continue the praise of His Majesty, for it seemed to her unfortunate that this praise would end with her and that there would be no one after her days to praise Him. And she told me that there wasn't any other desire that came to her mind. And she is a woman who is so truthful and good a Christian and virtuous, as I have said, that it often makes me praise our Lord to see her works and her great desires never to fail to use her time well and to please Him always.

7. Well, then, living many years with this desire and recommending it to St. Andrew, who, she was informed, is a patron of such causes, and after many other devotions that she had offered, she was told one night while lying down: "Do not desire children, for you will be condemned." She was left frightened and fearful. But not for this reason did the desire leave her, for it seemed to her that since her purpose was so good there would

be no reason for her to be condemned. So she continued to beg our Lord. Especially, she carried out a particular devotion to St. Andrew. Once, while experiencing this desire, though she doesn't know whether she was awake or asleep (whatever may be the case, it is clear that the vision was true from what followed), it seemed to her that she was in a house where on the patio beneath the gallery was a well. And she saw in that place a green meadow with white flowers, so beautiful she wouldn't be able to describe what she saw. Near the well, St. Andrew appeared in the form of a very venerable and handsome person, for it gave her great delight to look on him, and he said to her: "These are children other than those you desire." She did not want the great consolation she felt in that place to end; but it did not last. And she understood clearly that the vision was of St. Andrew, without anyone telling her; and also that our Lord willed that she found a monastery. Hence it can be understood that the vision was an intellectual as well as an imaginative one, nor could it have been either a whim or an illusion caused by the devil.

8. First, the vision was not a whim; this can be deduced from its great effect, for from that point on she never more desired children. She remained so convinced in her heart that this was God's will that she no longer asked for or desired them. Thus she began to think about the way in which she could do what the Lord wanted. Nor was it an illusion caused by the devil. This can be discerned from the fact that a monastery is now founded where our Lord is much served, for the devil of himself cannot do good. In addition, this took place more than six years before the monastery was founded, and the devil cannot know the future.

9. Very surprised by this vision, she told her husband that since God did not desire to give them children they should found a monastery of nuns. Being so good and loving her so much, her husband was happy with the idea and began to consider where they might found one. She wanted it in the town where she had been born. He put up legitimate objections to convince her that her town would not be a good place for it.

10. While they were discussing this, the duchess of Alba called for him. When he arrived, she ordered him to return to Alba to

undertake duties in her house, and he accepted the office even though it was a less important one than the office he had held in Salamanca.⁴ When his wife heard about it, she was very distressed because, as I said, she abhorred Alba. Being assured by her husband that they would not accept guests any more, she was somewhat appeased; although she was still very troubled since Salamanca was more to her liking. He bought a house and sent for her. She came with great weariness and felt wearier when she saw the house. For although the location was very good and the property extensive, the house did not have enough rooms; thus she was very troubled that night. The next morning, when she walked onto the patio, she saw on the same side the well where she had seen St. Andrew. And she saw everything else, no more nor less than what had been shown to her—I mean the place, not the saint or the flowers or the meadow, although she did have and still has them well imprinted in her imagination.

11. When she saw these things, she became troubled and resolved to found the monastery there. She did this now with great consolation and tranquility, without wanting to go somewhere else, and they began to buy more houses nearby until they had ample land. She was concerned about which order they would ask, for she wanted the nuns to be few and strictly enclosed. In discussing the matter with two religious from different orders, who were very good and learned men, she was told by both that it would be better to do some other good works because nuns are usually unhappy. And she was told many other things, for since the project saddened the devil he wanted to prevent it, and thus he made them think that the reasons they gave her were very sound. Since they presented so many as to why it wouldn't be good, and the devil presented more in order to hinder it, she became fearful and disturbed and decided not to go ahead. This she told to her husband, and the two of them felt that since such men had told her that it would not be good and her intention was to serve our Lord they should forget about it. Thus they agreed to arrange for a marriage between a niece on her husband's side and a nephew of hers, who was very virtuous and still young and whom she loved very much, and give them a great part of their estate, keeping the rest for their own spiritual well-

being. They were both left feeling certain and serene about this decision.

12. But since our Lord had ordained something else, their agreement was of little benefit. In less than fifteen days, the nephew became so seriously ill that within a very few days our Lord brought him to Himself. She became so convinced that the cause of her nephew's death had been her decision to set aside what God wanted her to do, in order to leave the estate to him, that she felt great fear. She recalled what happened to Jonah the prophet for not having wanted to obey God,⁵ and it seemed to her that God had punished her by taking away that nephew whom she loved so much. From that day on she was determined not to let anything make her fail to found the monastery, and her husband was also; although they didn't know how to go about it. It seemed to her that God had put into her heart what has now been accomplished. Those whom she told about the monastery, and to whom she described how she wanted it, laughed over the matter since they thought she would not find the things she was looking for; this was true especially of a confessor of hers, a Franciscan friar, a distinguished man of learning. She was very dejected.

13. At that time, this friar happened to go to a certain town where he was told about these monasteries of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel that were now being founded. Very well informed about them, he returned and told her he had now discovered how she could found the monastery she desired. He told her what had happened and that she should try to speak with me about it. This she did. We underwent much difficulty in trying to come to an agreement. For in the case of monasteries founded with an income, my goal always was that they have enough to keep the nuns from dependence on relatives, or on anyone, and that food and clothing and everything necessary be given to them in the house, and that the sick be very well cared for. For when necessities are lacking, many troubles arise. In founding many monasteries in poverty, without an income, I never lack courage or confidence; I am certain that God will not fail them. In founding them with an income that is small, everything fails me; I find it better that they not be founded.

14. She and her husband finally became reasonable and offered enough revenue to provide for the number of nuns. And what I highly appreciated, they left their own house in order to give it to us and moved into one that was in a dilapidated condition. The Blessed Sacrament was reserved and the foundation was made on the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, in the year 1571,⁶ for the glory and honor of God. In this foundation, in my opinion, His Majesty is very much served. May it please Him to protect it always.

15. I began to say some particular things about some of the Sisters in these monasteries thinking that when this would be read those now living in them would not be alive and that those who come after would be inspired to carry on in the tradition of such a good beginning. Afterward, it has seemed to me, there will be someone who will tell these things better and in more detail and without having the fear that I have had of giving the impression of being partial.⁷ And so I have left out many things considered miraculous by those who have seen or known of them, for such things are supernatural. I have not wanted to say anything about them or of what our Lord has been clearly seen to do through the nuns' prayers.

In the account of the dates on which these monasteries were founded I suspect that I am sometimes mistaken, although I try diligently to remember.⁸ Since these dates are not of great importance, because they can be corrected afterward, I put them down according to what I can remember; it makes little difference if there is some error.

Chapter 21

Treats of the foundation in Segovia of the Carmel of the glorious St. Joseph. It was founded on the very feast of St. Joseph in 1574.

I HAVE ALREADY MENTIONED how after I founded the monasteries of Salamanca and Alba and before we had our own house in Salamanca, the Father Maestro Fray Pedro Fernández,

who was then the apostolic commissary, ordered me to go to the Incarnation in Avila for three years.¹ I also mentioned that when he saw the need of the nuns in Salamanca for a house, he ordered me to go there so that they could move into one of their own.² One day while I was there in prayer, our Lord told me to go to Segovia and make a foundation. This seemed impossible to me, for I could not go unless ordered to do so, and I had learned from the apostolic commissary, the Father Maestro Fray Pedro Fernández, that he did not want me to make any more foundations. I also saw clearly that since the three years I was to stay in the Incarnation were not over, he had great reason for not wanting any more foundations. While I was thinking about this, the Lord told me to tell him and that He Himself would bring this foundation about.

2. At the time, I was in Salamanca. From there I wrote to His Paternity reminding him that he already knew I had a command from our most Reverend Father General to make a foundation when I saw that there was an opportunity for doing so. I mentioned that one of these monasteries had been accepted in Segovia by both the city and the bishop, that if His Paternity would give the order I would found it, that I was pointing this out to him to satisfy my conscience, and that I would feel confident and content with whatever he ordered. I believe these were the words, more or less, and I added that it seemed to me the monastery would render service to God. I think, indeed, that His Majesty wanted it, because the apostolic commissary said immediately that I should found it, and he gave me permission. From what I had known about him in regard to these matters, I was very much amazed. And from Salamanca I arranged that they rent me a house, for after the experience in Toledo and Valladolid I had learned that it was better to rent a house and take possession first and then look for one to buy. This was so for many reasons, the principal one being that I didn't have a cent to buy one with. Once the monastery was founded, the Lord would then provide; also, a more appropriate site could be chosen.

3. There was a lady there who had been the wife of the owner of an entailed estate. Her name was Doña Ana de Jimena. She had once come to see me in Avila. She was a good servant of God,

and her calling had always been to be a nun. Thus after the founding of the monastery, she and one of her daughters, who was living a devout life, entered it. And the Lord took away the unhappiness she had experienced both while married and as a widow and gave her a double measure of happiness in the religious life. Both mother and daughter had always been very recollected and faithful servants of God.³

4. This good lady acquired the house and provided for everything she saw we needed, both for the church and for ourselves. As a result, I had little work to do. But there is never a foundation in which there is not some trial. And the trial came in addition to the fact that I went there while suffering from a high fever and nausea, and from interior ills of very great dryness and darkness of soul, and from bodily complaints of many kinds, the intensity of which lasted three months. And for the half year that I was there, I was always sick.

5. On the feast of St. Joseph, we reserved the Blessed Sacrament. Although we had permission from both the bishop and the city, I did not want to enter except on the eve of the feast, secretly, and at night. Much time had passed since the permission had been given, but because I had been at the Incarnation and did not have our Father General for superior, but someone else,⁴ I had not been able to make the foundation. The permission I had received from the bishop of that place—when he agreed—was in word. He gave it through a gentleman named Andrés de Jimena who was looking for a house for us. But this gentleman didn't bother about getting the permission in writing, nor did this seem to me to matter. I was mistaken, for when the vicar general learned that the monastery had been founded, he came at once, very angry, and did not allow Mass to be said any more and wanted to take prisoner the one who said it, a discalced friar, who came with both Father Julián de Avila and another servant of God, who came with me, named Antonio Gaytán.⁵

6. This latter was a gentleman from Alba. He was called by the Lord some years before while very much involved in the world. He so trampled it under foot that all he thought about was how to serve the Lord more. In the foundations that will be dealt with from here on, mention will have to be made of him,

for he helped me much and did a great deal of work for me. I have told who he is, and if I should have to tell of his virtues, I would not finish very quickly. What mattered most to us was that he was so mortified, for there was no servant from among those who came with us who was as ready as he was to do all the necessary things. He is a man of deep prayer, and God has granted him so many favors that everything others would consider a burden made him happy and was easy for him to accept. This is the way he is in all the work that he has done for these foundations. For it indeed seems that God called both him and Father Julián de Avila for this purpose, although Father Julián de Avila was with us from the first foundation. By giving me company like this, our Lord must have desired that everything turn out well for me. It was Father Julián's characteristic while traveling to speak of God and to teach those who traveled with us or whom we met, and thus in every way he served His Majesty.

7. It is only right, my daughters, that those of you who read these foundations should know what you owe to these two (for without any self-interest they labored so much for this good that you enjoy, of being in these monasteries) in order that you might recommend them to our Lord and they might receive some benefit from your prayers. For if you knew the bad nights and days they suffered, and the trials on the roads, you would do so very willingly.

8. The vicar general did not want to go away without leaving a guard at the door of the church. I don't know why; it served to frighten a little those who were there. As for me, I was never much bothered by what happened once possession of the foundation had taken place; all my fears came before. I sent for some persons, relatives of a companion I brought from among my sisters,⁶ who were renowned in that place that they might speak to the vicar general and explain to him that I had permission from the bishop. He knew this very well, as he said afterward, but he thought we should have informed him. I believe that had we done so, things would have been much worse. Finally, they got him to agree to let us stay in the monastery, but he removed the Blessed Sacrament. This didn't matter to us. We remained thus for some months until a house was bought;⁷ along with it came

many lawsuits. We had lawsuits with the Mercedarians and, because the house had an annuity attached to it, with the cathedral chapter. Before this we had many difficulties with the Franciscan friars because of a house we tried to buy near them.

9. O Jesus! What a trial it is to have to contend with many opinions. When the litigation would seem to be over, it would begin anew because it wasn't enough to give them what they asked for; there was at once some other difficulty. Explained in this way, it all seems like nothing; but going through it was much different.

10. A nephew of the bishop did all that he could for us, for he was the prior and canon of that church;⁸ and so, too, did the licentiate Herrera, a very great servant of God. Finally, after we gave much money, the lawsuit came to an end. We were left with the lawsuit of the Mercedarians, for in order to move to the new house great secrecy was necessary. When they found out that we were there, for we had moved a day or two before the feast of St. Michael,⁹ they thought it would be good to settle for a sum of money. The greatest suffering that these obstacles caused me was that in no more than seven or eight days my three years as prioress at the Incarnation were to come to an end, and I necessarily had to be there.

11. Our Lord was pleased that everything should turn out so well that no contention remained, and within two or three days I was at the Incarnation.¹⁰ May His name be ever blessed who has always granted me so many favors, and may all creatures praise Him. Amen.

Chapter 22

Treats of the foundation named after the glorious St. Joseph of the Saviour and made in the town of Beas on the feast of St. Matthias in the year 1575.¹

WHEN I WAS SENT, as mentioned, from the Incarnation to Salamanca,² a messenger came there from the town of Beas with letters for me from a lady in that area and from the

curate beneficiary there. The letters contained both the offer of a benefice from that town and requests from other persons asking me to come and found a monastery. They already had a house; all that was needed was to go and make the foundation.

2. When questioned by me, the man recounted wonderful things about the land, and rightly so, for it is very delightful and has a good climate. But in considering the distance, many leagues from here, the notion of making a foundation there seemed to me foolish. Especially so, since I was under the orders of the apostolic commissary, who, as I mentioned,³ was opposed to, or at least not in favor of, my making foundations. So I wanted to answer that I was unable, and avoid asking permission of the apostolic commissary about it. Afterward, it seemed to me that since he was present at that time in Salamanca and I had received the order from our Reverend Father General not to fail to make foundations,⁴ it would be unwise to refuse without getting his opinion.

3. When he saw the letters brought to me by the messenger, he sent word that he didn't think it would be good to disappoint them, that he had been edified by their devotion, that I should write telling them that when they had permission from the Order of Knights of that town, provisions would be made for the foundation.⁵ He was certain that the council of the Order of Knights would not give the permission, for he had known from elsewhere that in many years no one had been able to receive such a permission from it, and he did not want my answer to sound like a refusal. Sometimes I think about this and how that which our Lord wants, even though we may not want it, comes about in such a way that without our being aware we are the instruments of it. In this case the instrument was the Father Maestro Fray Pedro Fernández, who was the commissary. And so when they received the permission from the council, he couldn't refuse. The foundation was made in this way.

4. This monastery of the blessed St. Joseph was founded in the town of Beas on the feast of St. Matthias in the year 1575. It came about for the honor and glory of God in the following way.

There was in this town a gentleman named Sancho Rodríguez de Sandoval, of noble lineage and having many temporal posses-

sions. He was married to a lady named Doña Catalina Godínez. Among the children that our Lord gave them were two daughters, those who founded this monastery. The older⁶ was fourteen when our Lord called her to His service. Up to this age she was far from ready to leave the world; on the contrary, she had such a high estimation of herself that all that her father sought for her in marriages seemed of small account.

5. One day while in a room next to the one in which her father was lying down, she happened to read on a crucifix the inscription that is placed over the cross. Suddenly when she read it, the Lord worked a complete change in her: She had been thinking of a marriage that was being sought for her, which was better than she could have hoped for, and saying to herself: "With what little my father is content, that I become connected with an entailed estate; I am thinking of becoming the origin of a new line of descendants." She was not inclined toward marriage, for she considered it demeaning to be subject to someone; nor did she know where this pride came from. The Lord knew how it could be remedied. Blessed be His mercy.

6. The moment she read the inscription, it seemed to her that just as sunshine enters a dark room, a light came into her soul by which she understood the truth. With this light she set her eyes on the Lord who was on the cross shedding blood, and she thought about how badly He was treated and of His great humility and about how different the road of pride was that she was following. There must have been some space of time in which the Lord suspended her. There His Majesty gave her a deep knowledge of her own misery, and she desired that all might know of it. He gave her so great a desire to suffer for God that all that the martyrs suffered she desired to suffer with them. She experienced such profound humiliation and self-aborrence that were it not an offense against God, she would have wanted to be a very dissolute woman so that all might abhor her. Thus she began to despise herself with great desires for penance, which afterward she put into effect. She at once promised chastity and poverty and wanted to see herself so subject that she would have rejoiced to be carried off then to the land of the Moors and remain there. All of these virtues lasted in

her in such a way that the experience was clearly seen to be a supernatural favor from our Lord, as will be said later, so that all might praise Him.

7. May You be blessed forever and ever, my God, for within a moment You undo a soul and remake it. What is this, Lord? I would want to ask here what the apostles asked You when You cured the blindman, whether it was his parents who had sinned.⁷ I mean, who could have merited so sublime a favor? She certainly did not, for it was already mentioned what thoughts You took away from her when You granted that favor. Oh, great are Your judgments, Lord! You know what You are doing, but I do not know what I am saying since Your works and judgments are incomprehensible. May You be ever glorified, for You have the power to do even more. What would become of me if this were not so? But, did the merit in some way come from her mother? For so great was her mother's practice of Christianity that it would be possible that Your goodness, being merciful, would desire that she see within her lifetime this great virtue in her daughters. Sometimes I think You grant similar favors to those who love You, and You do them so much good that You give them that by which they may serve You.

8. While she was in this state, such a loud noise came from the room above that it seemed everything was falling down. It seemed that all of that noise was coming down in the corner where she was, and she heard some roars that lasted quite a while. They were such that her father who although he had not yet got up, as was mentioned,⁸ became so frightened he began to tremble. As though beside himself, he took a robe and his sword and entered there and very much shaken asked her what that noise was. She told him that she hadn't seen anything. He looked in the next room further and since he saw nothing told her to go stay with her mother and informed her mother about what he had heard and not to let their daughter be alone.

9. This indeed explains what the devil must feel when he sees a soul already considered to be his own loosed from his power. Since he is so hostile toward what is good for us, I am not surprised that in seeing our merciful Lord grant so many favors all at once he should become frightened and make such a show of

his feeling. This was especially so, because he understood that on account of the riches that were left in that soul he had to remain without any that could be considered his. For I hold that our Lord never grants so great a favor to a person without allowing others to share in it as well. She never said anything about this. But she was left with the strongest desire to embrace religious life and frequently sought permission from her parents to do so. They would never give their consent.

10. After three years had gone by in which she frequently sought permission, she began, on the feast of St. Joseph,⁹ to dress in a simple manner since she saw that they did not want her to be a religious. She told only her mother from whom it would have been easy to obtain the permission to be a nun. As for her father, she did not dare ask, but she went to the church so that once the townspeople had seen her in this dress, she could be sure her parents would not take it away. And this is what happened, for they let the matter go. During those three years, she observed hours of prayer and mortified herself in every way she could, for the Lord taught her. She used to enter the courtyard and throw water on her face and then expose it to the sun so that because of the resulting ugly appearance her parents would give up the idea of a marriage for her, for she was still being urged to marry.

11. She no longer had any desire to give orders to anyone. Since she had charge of her father's house, it happened that when she realized that she had given orders to the housemaids, for she couldn't do otherwise, she would wait until they were asleep and kiss their feet, anxious because they, though better than she, were serving her. Since during the day she was busy with her parents, when it was time for sleep, she would spend the whole night in prayer. Thus, she often went with so little sleep that it would have been impossible for her to do so without supernatural aid. The penance and the disciplines were many because she had no one to guide her nor did she speak with anyone. Among other things, one Lent she wore her father's coat of mail next to her flesh. She used to go to a secluded place to pray, where the devil heaped ridicule on her. Often she began prayer at ten at night and was absorbed in it until daylight.

12. She spent about four years in these exercises. Then, desiring that she serve Him through other greater ones the Lord gave her most serious and painful illnesses. Thus she suffered from continual fever, dropsy, heart trouble, and a breast tumor which was removed. In sum, these illnesses lasted almost seventeen years; there were but few days in which she felt well. Five years after she had received the above favor from God, her father died.¹⁰ Her sister, when fourteen (one year after Doña Catalina had made this change) also put on a simple garb, for she had been fond of fine clothes, and began as well to practice prayer. Her mother helped them in all their good practices and desires. She thought that it was good for them to become occupied in a very virtuous work, one that was far out of harmony with their status: teaching girls needlework and reading, without any fee, but only for the opportunity to instruct the girls in prayer and doctrine. Their work was very fruitful because many girls were helped, and even now the good habits these girls learned when small are visible. The good work didn't continue for long because the devil, saddened by it, made the parents of the little girls feel that it was an affront for their daughters to be taught free of charge. This along with the beginning of the illnesses that afflicted her caused her to discontinue the work.

13. Five years after the father of these young ladies died, their mother died. Doña Catalina had always felt called to be a nun, but she could not get her parents' consent. She now wanted to go away at once to be a nun. Since there was no monastery in Beas, her relatives counselled her that since they had the sufficient means they should strive to found a monastery in their own town, that this would be of greater service to our Lord. Since the town is a commandery of the Order of the Knights of Santiago, permission was necessary from the council of this order, and so she diligently sought to obtain it

14. It was so difficult to obtain that they spent four years in which they underwent many trials and expenses; and until a petition was sent to the king himself, nothing proved helpful. And it happened that because the difficulty became so great, her relatives began to tell her that the idea was foolish and that she should forget about it. Since she was almost always in bed with

such serious illnesses, as was mentioned, they said that no monastery would accept her as a nun. She answered that if within a month our Lord gave her health they should understand thereby that He would be served by the monastery and that she would go to the royal court herself to obtain the license. When she said this, it had been more than half a year that she had not got out of bed; and for almost eight years she had hardly moved from it. During those eight years she suffered from a continual fever, consumption, tuberculosis, dropsy, and an inflammation of the liver. This latter could be felt, and it so burned that even her clothes were affected by it and her chemise scorched. This seems incredible, and I myself inquired of the doctor about these illnesses that she had at that time, for I was amazed. She also suffered from gout and sciatica.

15. On the eve of the feast of St. Sebastian, which was a Saturday,¹¹ our Lord gave her such complete health that she didn't know how to conceal it and prevent the miracle from being known. She says that when our Lord desired to cure her He gave her an interior trembling that made her sister think that her life was coming to an end. And she saw within herself the greatest change, and in her soul, she says, she felt another change which was beneficial to her. Because of her health she was able to attend to the business of the monastery, and this made her happier than did her feeling of good health. From the beginning when God called her, He gave her an abhorrence of self, for she made little of all. She says she was left with so powerful a desire to suffer that she begged God earnestly to exercise her in suffering in every way.

16. His Majesty did not fail to fulfill this desire. During those eight years they bled her more than five hundred times, without counting the many cuppings; the body shows them clearly. They put salt in the wounds, for the doctor said it was good for drawing the poison from a sore on her side; they did this more than twenty times. What is more amazing is that as soon as she was told that the doctor prescribed one of these remedies, she fearlessly longed for the time to come in which they would carry it out, and she encouraged the doctors to apply the cauteries, which were used often for a breast cancer and other purposes.

She says that what made her want this was the desire to prove whether or not the longings she had for martyrdom were authentic.

17. Since she found that she had suddenly become well she discussed with both her confessor and doctor the possibility of being brought to another town so that they could say the change of environment had caused the cure. They did not want to do so; on the contrary, they spread the news. They had already judged her to be incurable because the blood she was spitting up was so putrefied that they said it contained part of the lungs. She remained in bed for three days, not daring to get up lest the miracle of her health become known. But since it could be no more disguised than could her illness, the attempt to hide it was of little benefit.

18. She told me that the previous August while begging our Lord either to take away her great desire both to be a nun and to found a monastery or give her the means to do so she was convincingly assured that she would be well in time to go, during Lent, to obtain the license. Thus, she says that at that time even though the illnesses weighed more heavily on her, she never lost the hope that our Lord was going to grant her this favor. Even though she was anointed twice (one time she was so close to the end that the doctor said there would be no reason to go for the oils, that she would be dead before they arrived), she never stopped trusting in the Lord that she would die a nun. I don't mean that they anointed her twice between August and the feast of St. Sebastian, but before that.

When her brothers and relatives saw the favor and miracle that the Lord had performed in giving her health so suddenly, they did not dare prevent her from going, although it seemed foolish. She was at the royal court for three months, and in the end the license was not given. When she presented this petition to the king and he learned that it was for discalced Carmelite nuns, he ordered that it be given at once.¹²

19. When the time came to found the monastery, it seemed obvious that she had obtained this from God, for the superiors accepted it even though the town was so far away and the income small. What His Majesty desires cannot be set aside. Thus

the nuns came at the beginning of Lent in 1575. The people of the town received them with a solemn procession and great joy. The happiness was so universal that even the children showed that our Lord would be served by this work. The monastery was founded under the patronage of St. Joseph of the Saviour this same Lent on the feast of St. Matthias.¹³

20. On the same day the two sisters received the habit with much joy.¹⁴ The health of Doña Catalina continued to improve. Her humility, obedience, and wish to be despised show clearly that her desires had been authentic and for the service of our Lord. May He be glorified forever and ever, amen.¹⁵

21. This Sister told me, among other things, that almost twenty years ago she went to bed one night longing to find the most perfect religious order there was on earth so as to be a nun in it. She began to dream, in her opinion, that she was walking along a very straight and narrow road, very dangerous in that one could fall into some deep ravines that appeared. She met a discalced friar. (Seeing Fray Juan de la Miseria,¹⁶ a little friar, laybrother of the order who was in Beas while I was there, she said that he seemed to be the same one she had seen in the dream.) He said to her, "Come with me, sister," and brought her to a house with a great number of nuns in which there was no other light than that coming from some candles they were carrying. She asked what order this was; all remained silent, and then they lifted their veils and their faces were joyous and they were laughing. And she declares that she saw the faces of the same Sisters she now sees, and that the prioress took her by the hand and said to her, "Daughter, I want you here," and showed her the constitutions and the rule. When she awoke from this sleep, she felt a happiness that made her think she had been in heaven, and she wrote down what she remembered from the rule. Much time passed in which she didn't tell her confessor or anyone, and no one knew anything about this religious order.

22. When a Father from the Society¹⁷ who knew of her desires came there, she showed him the paper and told him that if he found that religious order she would like to enter it. He knew of these monasteries and told her how what was written was taken from the rule of the order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel; although

he didn't explain things to her so clearly, but just spoke of the monasteries that I was founding. Thus she arranged to send me a messenger as was mentioned.¹⁸

23. When they brought her the reply, she was so sick that her confessor told her to be calm and that even if she were in the monastery they would dismiss her, how much less would they accept her now. She was terribly distressed and turned to our Lord with great anxieties and said to Him: "My Lord and my God, I know through faith that You are He who can do all things; well, then, Life of my soul, either take away these desires or give me the means to carry them out." She said this with extreme confidence, begging our Lady through the sorrow she felt when she beheld her dead Son in her arms, to intercede for her. She heard a voice within her say: "Believe and hope for I am He who can do all things; you will be healthy, for He who had the power to prevent so many illnesses, each deadly in itself, from bringing about their effect will more easily take them away." She says that these words came with such force and certitude that she couldn't doubt that her desire would be granted, even though many more illnesses weighed her down until the Lord gave her the health we have mentioned. Certainly, what she has suffered seems incredible. Had I not been informed by the doctor and those who were in the house, or by other persons, being as wretched as I am, it would not have been unusual for me to think that some of this was exaggerated.

24. Although she is weak, she is now healthy enough to keep the rule. She is a good subject and has a very happy disposition and, as I have said,¹⁹ is humble in everything, which makes us all praise our Lord. The inheritance of each of them was given to the order without any conditions, so that even if they were not admitted to profession the money would still belong to the order. The detachment she has from both her relatives and property is great. And she always has the strong desire to move far away, and thus she begs this of her major superiors very much, although her obedience is so great that she is happily willing to remain there. And in this same spirit she received the white veil; for there was no way of getting her to become a choir Sister, but she wanted to be a lay Sister. This was so until I wrote to her

telling her many things, scolding her because she wanted something other than what was her Father Provincial's will.²⁰ I told her that wanting to be a lay Sister was not more meritorious, and I mentioned other things, and dealt with her harshly. And this is her greatest happiness, to be spoken to harshly. As a result she submitted, very much against her will, to becoming a choir Sister. I don't know anything about this soul that does not have to do with her trying to be more pleasing to God, and all the nuns feel the same way. May it please His Majesty to keep her in His hands and increase the grace and virtues He has given her for His greater service and honor. Amen

Chapter 23

*Treats of the foundation of the monastery of the glorious St. Joseph of Carmel in Seville. The first Mass was said on the feast of the most Blessed Trinity in 1575.*¹

WHILE I WAS IN THIS TOWN OF BEAS waiting for the license from the Council of the Order of Knights for the foundation in Caravaca, a Father from the discalced of our order named Maestro Jerónimo Gracián de la Madre de Dios came to see me.² A few years before he had received our religious habit while in Alcalá. Throughout his life he has been a man of much learning, intelligence, and modesty along with other great virtues. It seems, while he was in Alcalá, that he was chosen by our Lady for the good of this primitive order without his having the remotest idea of receiving our habit, although he had considered entering the religious life. His parents had other intentions because of his great talent and their good standing with the king,³ but he was far from being inclined toward their plans for him. From the time he began school, he was urged by his father to take up the study of law. Yet, while still very young, he felt so strongly the desire to study theology that by force of tears he got his father to allow him to do so.

2. After graduating with a master's degree, he took steps to enter the Society of Jesus, and they had accepted him. But for a

certain reason they told him to wait several days. He tells me that he was tormented by all the enjoyments in his life and that he didn't think they constituted a safe path to heaven. He always set aside the hours for prayer and was extremely recollected and upright.

3. At this time a close friend of his entered the monastery in Pastrana to become a friar in our order. This friend's name was Fray Juan de Jesús, and he, too, had a master's degree.⁴ I don't know how the interest began, whether it did so because of a letter Fray Juan wrote about the greatness and antiquity of our order or in some other way; for Father Gracián enjoyed very much reading everything about the order and verifying, through important authors, what was asserted. He says that he often had scruples about failing to study other things because he was unable to set these studies aside, and he occupied his hours of recreation in this way. O wisdom and power of God! How impossible for us to flee from His will! Our Lord truly saw the great need there was for a person like this to carry on the work that He had begun. I often praise Him for the favor He granted us in this matter. Had I very much desired to ask His Majesty for a person to organize all the things pertaining to the order in these initial stages, I would not have succeeded in asking for all that He in fact gave in Father Gracián. May the Lord be blessed forever.

4. Well then, while not having the slightest thought of taking the habit of this order, he was asked to go to Pastrana to speak to the prioress of our monastery there—for it had not yet been abandoned—that she might accept a nun.⁵ What means the divine Majesty takes! For had Father Gracián decided to go there to take the habit, he would perhaps have met with so much opposition that he might never have done so. But the Blessed Virgin, our Lady, to whom he is extremely devoted, wanted to repay him by giving him her habit. So I think she was the mediatrix through whom God granted him this favor. And this glorious Virgin was the reason he received it and became so fond of the order. She did not want one who desired to serve her so much to lack the occasion for putting this desire into practice. It is her custom to favor those who want to be protected by her.

5. While still a boy in Madrid, he often went to pray before an image of our Lady to whom he had great devotion. I don't remember where it was; he called her "his love," and his visits were very frequent.⁶ She must have obtained for him from her Son the purity in which he always lived. He says that sometimes it seemed to him his eyes were swollen from weeping over the many offenses committed against her Son. As a result there arose in him a strong impulse and desire to help souls, and he felt it very deeply when he saw offenses committed against God. He has so great an inclination toward the good of souls that any hardship becomes small to him if he thinks that through it he can produce some fruit. I have seen this myself in the many trials that he has undergone.

6. Well, the Virgin brought him to Pastrana as though by tricking him into the thought that he was going there in order to request the habit for a nun. And God brought him there in order to give him the habit. Oh, secrets of God! But how true that without our desiring it, He disposes us so as to give us favors. And this soul was repaid for the good deeds that he did, for the good example that he had always given, and for his great desire to serve the Lord's glorious Mother. His Majesty must always repay this latter with wonderful rewards.

7. Well, when he arrived in Pastrana, he went to speak to the prioress that she might accept the nun; and it seemed as though he had asked her to pray to the Lord that he himself might enter. For he is a very pleasant person so that generally he is loved by those who have dealings with him—it is a grace our Lord gives—and thus he is extremely loved by all his subjects, both friars and nuns. Yet he doesn't let any fault go by, for he is extraordinarily careful in looking out for the welfare of the religious life. In his actions he is so gentle and pleasant that it seems no one is able to complain about him.

8. Well, when this prioress saw him, that which happened to others happened to her; she felt a strong desire that he enter the order and told the Sisters how important it was to get him to join, for at the time there were very few, or almost none like him.⁷ And she told them all to beseech our Lord not to let him go without his receiving the habit.

This prioress is a very great servant of God. By her prayer alone I think she would have been heard by His Majesty; how much more would the prayers of nuns as good as those that were there be heard. All of them took the matter very much to heart and with fasts, disciplines, and prayer begged His Majesty continually. Thus He was pleased to grant us this favor. For since Father Gracián went to the monastery of the friars and saw so much religious observance and opportunity to serve our Lord and above all that it was the order of the Lord's glorious Mother whom he so much desired to serve, his heart was moved not to return to the world. The devil set before him many difficulties, especially the pain this would bring his parents. They loved him very much and had great trust that he would help provide for their children, for they had many daughters and sons.⁸ He left this care to God for whom he left all, and decided to be a subject of the Virgin and take her habit. So they gave it to him amid the great happiness of all, especially of the nuns and the prioress. The nuns gave much praise to our Lord, thinking that His Majesty had granted them this favor through their prayers.

9. He spent the year of probation with the humility one would find among the youngest novices. His virtue was especially tried at a time when the prior was absent. A very young friar was in charge who had no learning, very little talent, and no prudence for governing. He was without experience since he had only recently entered. The manner in which he guided them was excessive as well as were the mortifications he made them perform. Every time I think of them I am amazed at how Father Gracián was able to suffer them, especially how he could put up with persons like that. The spirituality God gave him was necessary for this suffering. It was clearly seen afterward that this young friar was the victim of much melancholy, and nowhere was he free of it.⁹ Even as a subject, he's a source of trouble, how much more so when he governs! The humor has much control over him, for he is a good religious, and God sometimes permits this mistake of putting such persons in office so as to perfect the virtue of obedience in those He loves.

10. So it must have happened that as a reward God has given Father Fray Jerónimo de la Madre de Dios the greatest light in

matters of obedience so that as one who had such a good initiation into its practice he might teach it to others. And that he might not lack experience in all the things we need to know about, he underwent the most severe temptations for three months prior to his profession. But as the good captain of the sons of the Virgin that he was to become, he defended himself well against these temptations. For when the devil harassed him most to get him to give up the habit, he defended himself by promising to make his vows and not give it up. He gave me a certain work that he wrote while undergoing those great temptations. It inspired me with much devotion, and the fortitude the Lord gave him is clearly seen.

11. It will seem inappropriate that he should have informed me of so many personal matters about his soul. Perhaps the Lord wanted this that I might record it here, and He might be praised in His creatures. For I know that neither to any confessor nor to any other person has this Father manifested so much about himself. At times he had reason for so doing because he thought that on account of my age and from what he had heard about me I had some experience. It was while we were speaking about other matters that he told me about these things and additional ones that cannot be suitably put in writing, for I would be going on at much greater length.

12. Certainly, I have used much restraint so that if this work should ever get into his hands he won't suffer pain. I couldn't help it, nor did it seem to me (for if this work is to be seen, it won't be for a long time yet) that one who did so much good for the renewal of the observance of the primitive rule should be forgotten. Although he was not the one who first began, he came along at the right moment. For sometimes I would have regretted¹⁰ ever having begun had it not been for the great confidence I had in the mercy of God. I'm referring to the houses of the friars, for those of the nuns, through God's goodness, have so far always gone well. Those of the friars were not going badly, but the basis was there for a very quick collapse. Since the discalced didn't have their own province, they were governed by the calced. Those who could have governed, such as Fray Antonio de Jesús, the one who began the renewal,¹¹ were not given

the power to do so. Nor did the friars have constitutions given by our most Reverend Father General.¹² In each house they did as they saw fit. Until the day comes in which they can govern themselves they will have much trouble because some think one way and others another. At times I found them very tiring.

13. Our Lord provided a remedy through the Father Maestro Fray Jerónimo de la Madre de Dios, because they made him apostolic commissary and gave him authority and rule over the discalced friars and nuns.¹³ He drafted constitutions for the friars, for we already had ours from our most Reverend Father General, and so he did not draw up any for us. But he did draw them up for the friars through the apostolic power he had and the talents that the Lord has given him as I have mentioned. In his first visitation of the friars, he arranged everything with such moderation and harmony that it indeed seemed he was helped by the Divine Majesty and that our Lady had chosen him to help her order. I begged her very much to intercede that her Son always favor this Father and give him grace to advance far in His service. Amen.

Chapter 24

Continues with the foundation of St. Joseph of Carmel in the city of Seville.

WHEN, AS I MENTIONED,¹ the Father Maestro Fray Jerónimo Gracián came to see me at Beas, we had never previously met although I had very much desired to meet him. (Yes, at times, we had corresponded.) I was extremely delighted when I learned he was there, for I greatly desired to meet him on account of the good reports given me concerning him. But much greater was my happiness when I began speaking with him, for it seemed from the way he pleased me that those who had praised him had hardly known him at all.

2. Since at that time I had so many difficulties, it seems that when I saw him the Lord showed me the good that was going to come to us through him. So during those days I went about with such excessive consolation and happiness that indeed I was sur-

prised at myself. At that time he did not have authority outside Andalusia. It was when he was in Beas that the nuncio sent to see him and then gave him authority over the discalced friars and nuns of Castile.² So much joy did my spirit feel that I couldn't thank our Lord enough those days, nor did I want to do anything else.

3. At this time they had brought the license for the foundation in Caravaca. The permission granted did not correspond with my proposal, and so it was necessary to petition the royal court again. For I had written to the foundresses that the foundation would in no way be made unless a certain missing detail were asked for, and so it was necessary to appeal again to the court.³ It cost me a great deal to wait there so long, and I wanted to return to Castile. But since Father Fray Jerónimo was there, to whom that monastery was subject, and since he was the commissary for the whole province of Castile,⁴ nothing could be done without his approval; so I talked to him about it.

4. He thought that if I were to leave, the foundation in Caravaca would fail, and also that a foundation in Seville would render great service to God. It seemed to him this latter would be very easy, for some well-to-do people had asked him and were able and wealthy enough to provide a house at once. The archbishop of Seville⁵ so favored the order that Father Fray Jerónimo believed a foundation would render the order a great service. So it was arranged that the prioress and the nuns who were to go to Caravaca would instead go to Seville, although for certain reasons I had always strongly refused to found these monasteries in Andalusia. If when I went to Beas I had known that it was in Andalusia, I would by no means have gone. The mistake was that although the land was not yet within Andalusia, which I believe begins five or six leagues further, the ecclesiastical province was.⁶ Since I saw that a foundation in Seville was the resolve of my major superior, I immediately submitted, although I had decided on another foundation and had some very serious reasons against going to Seville. (This is a favor our Lord grants me, to have the opinion that these superiors are right in everything.)

5. Preparations were immediately begun for the journey be-

cause it was beginning to get very hot. Father Apostolic Commissary, Gracián, responding to a call from the nuncio left for a meeting with him,⁷ and we for a journey to Seville with my good companions, Father Julián de Avila, Antonio Gaytán, and a dis-calced friar.⁸ We journeyed in wagons well covered, which was our mode of traveling, and when we reached an inn we took whatever room was available, good or bad. And one Sister received what we needed at the door, for not even those who journeyed with us entered the room.

6. Although we hurried along on our journey, we did not reach Seville until the Thursday before Trinity Sunday,⁹ after having endured scorching heat. Even though we did not travel during siesta time, I tell you, Sisters, that since the sun was beating on the wagons, getting into them was like stepping into purgatory. Sometimes by thinking of hell, at other times by thinking that something was being done and suffered for God, those Sisters journeyed with much happiness and joy. The six souls who were with me were of the kind that made me think I was daring enough to go off with them to the land of the Turks and that they had the fortitude, or better, our Lord gave them the fortitude, to suffer for Him; for this was the subject of their desires and conversations. They were very experienced in prayer and mortification. Since they had to remain so far away, I chose those who seemed to me to be the most apt.¹⁰ And this was all necessary because of the trials that were suffered. Some of the hardships, and the greatest, I won't mention because another person might be involved.

7. One day before Pentecost, God gave them a severe trial by sending me a very high fever. I believed that their cries to God were enough to prevent the sickness from getting worse. Never before in my life had I experienced a fever like this without its growing worse. It made me think I had sleeping sickness so withdrawn did it make me. They threw water on my face, but being so hot from the sun, the water provided little refreshment.

8. I don't want to fail to mention the bad inn at which we stayed when I was in this condition. We were given a small room with just a bare tile roof. It had no window, and when the door was opened, the sun poured in everywhere. You must remember

that the sun in that region is not like it is in Castile, but much more annoying. The bed on which they made me lie down was such that I would have fared better on the ground. One part was so high and the other so low that one didn't know how to stay in it; it was like lying on sharp stones. What a thing sickness is! For when we're healthy, it's easy to put up with all kinds of inconveniences. Finally I decided it would be better if I got up and we left. It seemed better to me to suffer the sun in the field than in that little room.

9. What will it be like for the poor ones who are in hell? Never will there be any change at all, for even a change from one trial to another brings with it some relief. It has happened to me that when after suffering from very severe pain in one place I experienced other pain elsewhere, the change seemed to provide some relief even though the pain was just as great; so it was in this instance. As for me, insofar as I remember, it didn't cause me any distress that I was sick; the Sisters suffered much more than I. The Lord was pleased that the severity of the fever did not last beyond that day.

10. A little before this—I don't know whether it was two days—something else happened to us which got us into a tight spot while we were crossing the Guadalquivir on a barge. When it was time for the wagon to cross, it was not possible to make a straight crossing where the rope was, but they had to wind their way across; the rope from the other shore was of some help by flowing with the barge. However, it happened that those who were holding the rope let it go, or I don't know what happened, for the barge went off with the wagon and without rope or oars. I felt much more concern in seeing the anxiety of the boatman than I did about the danger. We were all praying; the others were all screaming.

11. A gentleman watching us from a nearby castle was moved with pity and sent someone to help, for the barge then had not yet broken loose and our brothers¹¹ were pulling, using all their strength; but the force of the water dragged them along to the point that some fell to the ground. Indeed, the boatman's son caused in me feelings of great devotion, which I never forget—he must have been ten or eleven years old—for the way he was

working so hard upon seeing his father in this difficulty made me praise our Lord. But as His Majesty always gives trials in a compassionate way, so He did here. It happened that the boat got stuck on part of a sand bar where there was not much water; thus a rescue was made possible. Since nightfall had come, we would not have known how to continue our journey if someone from the castle had not come to guide us.

I had not thought of dealing with these things because they are of little importance, and I could have mentioned many bad incidents that occurred on our journeys. But I have been urged to enlarge on my account of this trip.

12. A much greater trial for me than those mentioned was what happened to us on the second day after Pentecost. We were hurrying to reach Córdoba in the morning so as to hear Mass without being seen by anyone. For the sake of greater solitude, they led us to a church located on the other side of a bridge. When we were about to cross the bridge, we found that on account of the wagons we needed a license which is issued by the magistrate. This took more than two hours since he was not up yet, and many people approached to find out who we were. This didn't bother us much because, since the wagons were well covered, the people were unable to do so. When the license finally came, we found that the wagons wouldn't fit through the gate of the bridge. It was necessary to saw them, or I don't know what, which took another while. When we finally reached the church where Father Julián de Avila was to say Mass, it was filled with people. The church was dedicated to the Holy Spirit, which we had not known, and thus they were celebrating an important feast in which a sermon was to be preached.

13. When I saw this I was very sorry. It seemed to me better to go without hearing Mass than to enter such turmoil. It didn't seem so to Father Julián de Avila. And since he was a theologian, we all had to follow his opinion. My other companions perhaps would have followed mine, and it would have been ill-advised, although I don't know if I would have trusted only in my opinion. We got out near the church, and although no one was able to see our faces, since we always wore large veils in front of them, it

was enough for the people to see us with the veils, the white, coarse woolen mantles we wore, and our sandals of hemp for them to get all stirred up; and that's what happened. The shock was certainly a great one for me and for all, and it must have taken away my fever completely.

14. As we entered the church, a friendly man approached me so as to hold off the people. I pleaded with him to bring us to some chapel. He did so and closed it and did not leave us until we left the church. After a few days, he came to Seville and told a Father of our order that he thought God had rewarded him for the good deed he had performed, for the Lord had provided him with, or given him, a large estate about which he had forgotten.

I tell you, daughters, although it may perhaps seem to you to be nothing, this incident was for me one of the really bad moments I went through. From the uproar of the people you would think that a herd of bulls had come into the church. Thus, I couldn't wait to get out of that place. Since there was nowhere nearby to take siesta, we took it under a bridge.

15. When we reached Seville and the house that Father Fray Mariano had rented for us, which he had been told about, I figured that everything was done. As I say, the archbishop favored the discalced and had at times written to me manifesting much love.¹² That wasn't enough to keep him from causing me much trouble, for God so desired it. The archbishop is very much opposed to monasteries of nuns founded in poverty, and he is right. The trouble was that he hadn't been told; or rather, that was to the advantage of this foundation, for had he been told I am certain he would not have agreed to it. Since Father Commissary and Father Mariano (for whom also my arrival had been the source of the greatest happiness) were most certain that by my coming I would be doing the archbishop an enormous favor, they did not tell him beforehand. And, as I say, while thinking they were right, they could have been making a great mistake. With the other monasteries, the first thing I did was to obtain the license from the ordinary of the place as the holy Council requires.¹³ In this case, not only did we consider the license as given, but also, as I say, we thought the monastery would be a

great favor to him, as it truly was, and this he came to understand afterward. But the Lord desired that no foundation be made without some trial in one way or another.¹⁴

16. Well, when we arrived at the house which, as I say, they had rented for us, I thought we could immediately take possession, as was my custom, so that we could say the Divine Office. But Father Mariano began to procrastinate—he was the one who was there—and so as not to cause me any grief, he did not want to tell me everything. Since he didn't have sufficient reasons, I understood where the difficulty lay, which was that the license had not been granted. The archbishop told me that it would be good if the monastery were founded with an income, or something like that, for I don't remember. Finally, he told me that he didn't like to grant permission for monasteries of nuns, and that since he had been archbishop he had never done so for any. He had been there many years, as well as in Córdoba, and he is a great servant of God. Especially, he didn't like giving a license for a monastery to be founded in poverty and said that he would not do so.

17. This amounted to saying that the monastery must not be founded. First, it would have seemed to me wrong to found in the city of Seville a monastery with an established income even though I could have done so. The places where I did agree to make foundations with an income were small and required that either I found the monastery with an income or not at all since without one there would be no means of sustenance. Secondly, not a cent was left from the expenses of the journey, and we hadn't brought anything with us except what we were wearing and some tunics and toques, and what was necessary in order to cover the wagons and travel comfortably in them. In order that those who came with us could return, they had to look for a way of borrowing. One of Antonio Gaytán's friends who was there lent them what they needed. And Father Mariano looked for what was necessary to furnish the house; nor did we have a house of our own. Thus, it was an impossible situation.

18. Through what must have been persistent pleading on the part of the said Father we were allowed to have Mass, which was the first, on the feast of the most Blessed Trinity.¹⁵ But word was

sent that the bell should not be rung; neither was it to be put up, although it had already been put up. We were in this situation more than fifteen days. I know that if it had not been for Father Commissary and Father Mariano, I would definitely have returned with my nuns, and with very little regret, to Beas for the foundation in Caravaca. Much greater was the regret I actually experienced those days; since I have a bad memory, I do not remember, but I believe this lasted more than a month. For it was more difficult to return now after the monastery was known than it would have been immediately after our arrival. Father Mariano never allowed me to write to the archbishop, but instead went about gradually trying himself to convince him, making use also of letters from Father Commissary who was in Madrid.

19. As for me, one thing was calming and prevented me from feeling great scruple; it was that Mass had been said with the archbishop's permission, and we always said the Divine Office in choir. The archbishop did not fail to send a visitor with the message that he would see me soon, and an assistant was sent to say the first Mass. Hence I saw clearly that there was no point in my being disturbed. Yet, I felt distressed, not because of me or my nuns, but because of the anxiety Father Commissary experienced. Since he had ordered me to come, he felt very bad and would have been pained were something unfortunate to have happened, and he had many reasons for worrying about that.

20. At this time the calced Fathers came in order to inquire concerning the authority by which the foundation had been made. I showed them the patents I had from our most Reverend Father General.¹⁶ With this they were calmed. But if they had known what the archbishop was doing, I don't think the documents I showed them would have sufficed. However, this was not known, and everyone thought the foundation pleased the archbishop very much and made him happy. Finally, God was pleased that he come to see us. I told him about the harm he was doing us. In the end, he told me that the monastery could remain and in the way I wanted it. From then on, he always favored and supported us in everything that occurred.

Chapter 25

Continues telling about the foundation named after the glorious St. Joseph in Seville and about what we suffered in order to get our own house.

NO ONE WOULD HAVE THOUGHT that in a city as wealthy as Seville and with so many rich people there would be fewer opportunities for a foundation than in any of the other places I had gone to. There was so much less help that I sometimes thought that it would not be good for us to have a monastery in that place. I don't know if the climate itself of that territory is the reason. I have always heard it said that the devils have greater leeway there to tempt souls, for God must grant it to them. They certainly afflicted me there, for I never felt more pusillanimous or cowardly in my life. Indeed, I didn't recognize myself, although the confidence I usually have in our Lord did not leave me. But in my human nature I felt very different from the way I usually do after taking part in these things. I figured that the Lord partly withdrew His hand so that my human nature might be left to itself and I might see that my courage did not come from me.

2. Well then, I stayed there from this time of which I am speaking until a little after Lent.¹ There was not a chance of buying a house, nothing either with which to buy one, nor even anyone who would lend to us as there were in other places. Those women who had often told Father Apostolic Visitor² that they would enter our community and had asked him to bring nuns there, afterward thought we were too strict and that they would not be able to endure the life. Only one person, about whom I shall speak later, entered.³ The time, then, came in which I received orders to leave Andalusia because there were other business matters for me to attend to up here.⁴ It distressed me deeply to have to leave the nuns without a house, although I saw clearly that I wasn't accomplishing anything there. For the favor God grants me up here of having people to help me in these works, I did not have there.

3. God was pleased at that time that my brother, Lorenzo de

Cepeda, return from the Indies where he had been for more than thirty-four years.⁵ Feeling worse than I that the nuns would be staying there without having their own house, he helped us a great deal, especially in procuring the house in which they now live. For my part, I pleaded with our Lord, begging Him that I not have to go away and leave the nuns without a house. I had the Sisters ask Him as well as the glorious St. Joseph for this favor and we offered many processions and prayers to our Lady. Along with this, seeing my brother determined to help us, I began discussing the purchase of some houses. Just when it seemed that everything was starting to work out, it all came to naught.

4. One day, while I was in prayer beseeching our Lord to give them a house since they were His brides and had such desire to please Him, He told me: "I have already heard you; leave it to Me." I was left feeling very happy since it seemed I already had the house. And this was so. His Majesty prevented us from buying one that because of its nice location was pleasing to all. But the house itself was so old and run down that only the site was being bought and for not much less than was paid for the house we have now. Though all was agreed upon and only the contract remained to be drawn up, I was by no means satisfied. This didn't seem to be in accord with the words I had heard in prayer; for those words, I believed, were a sign that a good house would be given to us. And thus the Lord was pleased that the owner, even though he was making a great profit, should raise a difficulty about signing the contract at the established time, and we were able, without any fault, to get out of the agreement. This was a great favor from our Lord, for there was so much work to be done on the house that the Sisters living there would never in all their lives have been able to do it; and their means were few.

5. Much help was given to us by a servant of God who, from almost as soon as we arrived, began to come each day to say Mass, since he knew that we did not have a celebrant, even though his house was far away and the weather was extremely hot. His name is Garciálvarez.⁶ Highly esteemed in the city on account of his good works, he is never occupied with anything but them. And had he been wealthy, we would not have lacked

anything. Knowing all about the house, he thought it would be very foolish to give so much for it. Thus, each day he told us so and managed to get us to speak of it no more. He and my brother went to see the house in which the nuns now live. They got to like it so much, and rightly so—and our Lord wanted this—that in two or three days the contract was signed.⁷

6. What we had to go through before moving in was no trifle. The occupant did not want to leave, and the Franciscan friars, since they were nearby, came at once trying to persuade us that we should by no means move in. If the contract had not been so firmly signed, I would have praised God that it could be broken, because we found ourselves in danger of paying six thousand ducats for a house we were unable to move into. This was not how the prioress viewed the matter.⁸ She praised God that the contract could not be broken, for in regard to that house, His Majesty gave her more faith in Him and courage than He did me; just as in everything else, for she is much better than I.

7. This trouble lasted more than a month. God was finally pleased that we move, the prioress with myself and two other nuns, in great fear, at night so that the friars would not be aware until we took possession. Those who came with us said that every shadow they saw seemed to be a friar. When morning came, the good Garcíálvarez, who was with us, said the first Mass, and then our fears left us.

8. O Jesus! How many fears I have suffered before taking possession of these foundations! I reflect on the fact that if one can feel so much fear in doing something good, for the service of God, what must be the fear of those who do evil, deeds that are against God and against neighbor? I don't know what they can gain or what satisfaction they can find as a counterbalance to all that fear.

9. My brother was not there yet since he had sought sanctuary on account of a certain error made in the contract which was drawn up so hastily. The error was very harmful to the monastery, and since he was the guarantor of the loan they wanted to arrest him.⁹ And because he was an outsider, there was the possibility that they would harass us, and in fact they did, for

until he put up collateral there was trouble. Afterward the negotiations went well, although there was some contention at times so that we might suffer greater trial. We were enclosed in some rooms on the ground floor, and he was there all day with the workers, and he provided us with food as he had been doing before. Since we were in what had been a private home, not everyone knew it was a monastery, and thus there were few alms save for those of the saintly old prior of Las Cuevas, a Carthusian monk and very great servant of God from the Pantoja family in Avila.¹⁰ God gave him so much love for us that from the time we arrived he did not cease helping in every way, and I think he will continue doing so until he dies. We owe a great deal to this saint. I put this down here, daughters, so that if you read it you will pray for the one who helped us so much, and it is right that you pray for him and for all those, living or dead, who have helped us.

10. My brother stayed with us more than a month, I think. (On this subject of time, I have a poor memory and so I could be mistaken; always understand me to be saying "more or less" since it doesn't matter.) During this month he worked a great deal in constructing the church out of some rooms in the house and adapting everything so that we didn't have to do anything.

11. After all the work was finished, I wanted to have the Blessed Sacrament reserved without any noisy display, for I am much opposed to causing any bother if it can be avoided, and so I mentioned this to Father Garciálvarez. He spoke about it with the Father Prior of Las Cuevas, for they were looking after our affairs as they would their own. Their opinion was that in order to make the monastery known in Seville the Blessed Sacrament would have to be reserved with solemnity, and they went to the archbishop. All agreed that the Blessed Sacrament should be brought with much solemnity from a parish, and the archbishop ordered that the clerics and confraternities gather for the occasion and that the streets be decorated.

12. The good Garciálvarez decorated our cloister which then, as I mentioned, looked on to the street. And in decorating the church he went to every extreme with many very nice altars and some other contrivances. Among these latter was a fount

having orange-flower water which we neither requested nor even wanted; although afterward it did give us much devotion. And we were consoled to see that our festival was celebrated with such solemnity, with the streets highly decorated, and a great deal of music and many musical instruments. The saintly prior of Las Cuevas told me that he had never seen anything like this before in Seville, that it was evidently the work of God. He himself walked in the procession, which he was not accustomed to doing. The archbishop reserved the Blessed Sacrament.¹¹

Here you see, daughters, the poor discalced nuns honored by all. A little earlier it didn't seem that there would even be any water for them, although there is a great deal in the river. The number of people that came was extraordinary.

13. One thing that happened, according to all who saw it, is worth noting. Since after the procession there was much shooting of artillery and firecrackers, the people had the urge to continue, for it was almost night. And I don't know how, but some powder caught fire, and it was a great wonder that the person who had it didn't get killed. A huge flame leaped up as high as the cloister. The people thought that the taffeta hangings covering the arches would all be reduced to ashes. But no damage was done to them at all, though they were yellow and bright red. What was frightening is that the stone of the arches, under the hangings, was blackened by the smoke, but the taffeta hangings were left unmarred as if the fire had not reached them.

14. All were amazed when they saw it. The nuns praised the Lord that they didn't have to pay for new taffeta. The devil must have been so angry at seeing another house of God and the solemnity that was demonstrated that he wanted somehow to get revenge. But His Majesty did not allow this; may He be blessed forever, amen.

Chapter 26

Continues the account of the foundation of the monastery of St. Joseph in the city of Seville. Tells some very noteworthy things about the first nun who entered there.

YOU CAN EASILY UNDERSTAND, my daughters, the consolation we had that day. For my part, I can tell you that it was very great. I was especially consoled to see that I was leaving the Sisters in a house that was so good and well located, and that the monastery was known, and that there were enough new nuns to pay for the greater part of the cost of the house. Thus, those who in the future, before the established number is reached, may want to enter can do so no matter how little the dowry they bring with them, and the debt can still be paid off. Above all, I was happy for having shared in the trials, and when there was opportunity for a little rest, I left. This festival took place the Sunday before Pentecost in the year 1576, and immediately on Monday, the following day, I departed,¹ for the extremely hot weather was beginning to come and I wanted to be in Malagon before Pentecost and not have to travel on that day. I would have liked to have delayed a day or so, but for the above reason I left in a hurry.

2. The Lord was not pleased that I be there even one day to hear Mass in the chapel. The nuns' happiness was greatly spoiled by my departure.² They felt it very keenly, for we had gone through so many trials together in that year. As I have said,³ I am not recording the worst ones here. In my opinion, aside from the first foundation in Avila (for with that one there is no comparison), none of the other foundations cost me as much as this one did in which the trials were for the most part interior ones. May it please the Divine Majesty that He always be served there, as I hope He will be, for then everything else is of little importance. His Majesty began to draw good souls to that house. As for the five who remained, out of the six I brought with me, I have already told you how good they were; that is, something of what can be told, which is the least. I wish to speak now of the first nun who entered there since her story is something you will enjoy hearing about.

3. She was the young daughter of very Christian parents. Her father was from the mountain region. She was still young, around seven, when her aunt, who had no children, begged her mother to allow her to stay with her. When she was brought to the house, her aunt must have shown her much love and affection as was natural. The maids had been hoping they would get the aunt's inheritance, but now it was clear that since the aunt loved the child she would leave it to her. The maids decided together to remove that obstacle through a diabolical plot, inventing a calumny against the child, saying that she wanted to kill her aunt. And in order to carry this out they gave one from among them I don't know how much money to buy some corrosive sublimate. When they told the aunt, she believed them at once because they all said the same thing. And the child's mother did too, for she is a very virtuous woman.

4. She took the child and brought her home thinking that she might turn out to be a very bad woman. Beatriz de la Madre de Dios,⁴ for that is her name, tells me that for more than a year they spanked, punished, and made her sleep on the floor so that she would confess that she had planned to do something so evil. Since the girl denied that she had done it and said that she didn't know what corrosive sublimate was, her mother thought she was much worse since she was stubborn enough to deny it. The poor mother was so afflicted to see her daughter so headstrong in her refusal to admit she had done anything that she thought her daughter would never make amends. It's amazing that the girl didn't admit she was guilty just to free herself from so much punishment. But since she was innocent, God sustained her so that she continued to uphold the truth. And since His Majesty defends those who are without fault, He sent two of those maids an illness so bad that it seemed they had caught the rabies. Secretly they sent for both the little girl and her aunt and begged pardon from them, and finding themselves at the point of death they retracted. The other maid did likewise before dying in childbirth. In sum, all three of them died agonizing deaths in payment for what they had made that innocent girl suffer.

5. I did not learn this solely from her, for her mother, after

she saw that her daughter had become a nun, grieved over the bad treatment they had given her, and told me about it along with other things, for the girl's martyrdoms were many. And God permitted that, without it being her fault, the mother, who was a good Christian and loved her daughter, become her daughter's executioner. This mother is a woman of great honesty and deep Christian spirit.

6. While reading a book on the life of St. Anne, the child, when a little more than twelve years old, became very devoted to the saints of Carmel. For the author of the book says that St. Anne's mother—I believe her name is Merenciana—often went to speak to those saints. The effect this reading had on the girl was one of great devotion to the order of our Lady, for she then promised to become a nun in that order and also made a promise of chastity. When she could, she gave much time to solitude and prayer. In this solitude God and our Lady granted her many great and special favors. She would have liked to become a nun at once but she didn't dare because of her parents. Nor did she know where to find this order; which is surprising, for there was a monastery of the mitigated rule in Seville. But she had never heard of it until she heard of our monasteries many years later.

7. When she reached the marriageable age, though she was still but a girl, her parents came to an agreement on whom she should marry. She was their only child. Although she had had other brothers, they had all died, and she, the less loved by her parents, was left. (When what I mentioned⁵ happened one of her brothers was alive, and he defended her saying that the calumny should not be believed.) Once the marriage was arranged, her parents didn't think she would have any objection, but when they told her she answered that she had made a vow not to get married and that no scheme whatever on their part, even if they were to kill her, would get her to do so.

8. Because either the devil blinded the parents or God permitted this so that she would be a martyr, they thought she had done something wicked and that for that reason she did not want to get married. Since they had already given their word and their not following through on it would have been taken as an affront by the other party, they gave her so many whippings,

inflicted on her so many punishments, even to the point of wanting to hang her, for they were choking her, that it was fortunate they didn't kill her. God who desired her for greater things saved her. She tells me that in the end she hardly felt anything because she recalled what St. Agnes had suffered, that the Lord had brought it to her mind, that she was pleased to suffer something for Him, and that she did nothing but offer herself to Him. They thought she would die, for she was in bed three months, unable to stir.

9. It seems very strange that the parents of this young maiden, a girl who never left her mother's side and whose father was very circumspect, should think so much evil of their daughter. She was always holy and virtuous, and very dedicated to almsgiving; all that she could obtain she gave away in alms. If our Lord wishes to grant someone the favor of suffering, He has many means; although, for some years our Lord had been revealing to her parents the virtue of their daughter so that they gave her all she wanted for distributing alms, and the former persecutions were changed into tokens of affection. Nonetheless, because of her longing to be a nun everything was a hardship for her; thus, according to what she told me, she went about dejected and troubled.

10. It happened that thirteen or fourteen years before Father Gracián went to Seville (when nobody had even heard of discalced Carmelites), while she was with her father and mother and two other women who were neighbors, a discalced friar of our order dressed in the coarse wool habit these friars now wear entered their house. They say his face was both fresh and venerable, although he was so old that his beard seemed made of silver threads, and it was long. He approached her and began to speak to her a little in a language that neither she nor anyone else understood. When he finished, he blessed her three times saying: "Beatriz, may God make you strong." And then he went away. No one stirred while he was there, but all remained as though stupefied. Her father asked her who he was. She had thought that her father had known him. They got up at once to go and look for him, but he was seen no more. She remained very consoled, and all the others very amazed, for they considered

this to be something from God, and so they then began to esteem her highly as was said.⁶ After this, all those years passed, I believe they were fourteen, while she was ever serving our Lord, beseeching Him to fulfill her desire.

11. She was very weary by the time Father Maestro Fray Jerónimo Gracián arrived there. Going one day to hear a sermon in a church in Triana, which is where her father was living, without knowing who the preacher would be—it was the Father Maestro Gracián—she saw him go up to receive the blessing. When she saw the habit and that he was discalced, she at once recalled the one whom she had seen, for the habit was the same; although the face and the age were different, for Father Gracián was not yet thirty years old. She tells me that her joy was so great she almost fainted, for although she had heard that a monastery was founded there in Triana she had not known to which order it belonged.⁷ Immediately, from that day she began to try to confess to Father Gracián. Yet God desired that even that would cost her much, for she tried more than, or at least as many as, twelve times, but the Father never wanted to hear her confession. Since she was young and attractive in appearance—for she must have been no more than twenty-seven—he avoided conversation with her; he is very circumspect.⁸

12. Finally, one day while she was in the church weeping (being also very reserved), a lady asked her what the trouble was. She told her that she had been trying for a long time to speak with that Father who was then in the confessional and that she had not succeeded. The lady brought her to the confessional and begged him to hear the young girl's confession, and thus this girl was able to make a general confession to him. When he saw what a virtuous soul she was, he was greatly consoled, and he consoled her, telling her that perhaps discalced nuns would come there and that he would arrange that they accept her immediately. And that is what happened. The first command he gave me was that she be the first to be admitted, for he was satisfied with her soul. And he informed her of this after we had arrived there. He insisted that she not let her parents know because otherwise there would be no possibility of her entering. And thus on the feastday of the Holy Trinity⁹ she took leave

from some women who accompanied her to the church. (Her mother did not go with her when she went to the monastery of the discalced friars for confession, which is where she always went, for it was far away. And she, and her parents through her, gave many alms to the monastery.) She had arranged with a woman who was a very good servant of God to bring her and told the women who were accompanying her that she would soon return. And they allowed her to go since the woman companion was very well known in Seville as a servant of God who did great works of mercy. She put on her habit and mantle of coarse wool; I don't know how she was able to move, except that the happiness she felt made everything seem easy. Her only fear was that someone might recognize her behind this heavy habit, so different from her usual mode of dress, and stop her. What wonders the love of God works! Since she was no longer concerned about her honor and thought of nothing but how to realize her desire, we opened the door at once. I sent word of this to her mother. Her mother came to the monastery as though out of her mind; but she said that she already saw the favor God was granting her daughter. And although she was grieved, she overcame it courageously and did not go to the extreme of not speaking to her daughter as others do. She gave us many alms.

13. This bride of Christ began to enjoy the happiness she had so much longed for and was so humble and fond of doing all there was to do that we could hardly get the broom away from her. Whereas in her own home she had been so pampered, here she found all her rest in working. In her great happiness she began to put on weight. This pleased her relatives so much that they were now content to see her there.

14. In order that she would not enjoy so much good without suffering, she experienced very severe temptations two or three months before the time in which she was to make her profession;¹⁰ not because she had decided against making it, but because it seemed to her a very serious step to take. The devil, making her forget all those years in which she had suffered to attain this blessing, was so tormenting her that she could not overcome the temptation. Nevertheless, by absolutely forcing herself, she defeated him in such a way that in the midst of these torments

she made the plans for her profession. Our Lord, who must not have been waiting for anything more than the testing of her fortitude, visited and consoled her in a very special way three days before the profession and put the devil to flight. She remained so consoled that during those three days it seemed as though she was outside herself with happiness; and rightly so because the favor had been great.

15. A few days after she entered the monastery, her father died. Her mother took the habit in the same monastery and gave all she possessed in alms.¹¹ Both mother and daughter experience the greatest happiness, edifying all the nuns and serving Him who granted them so wonderful a favor.

16. A year had not passed before another young lady, against the will of her parents, entered. And thus the Lord continues to fill this house of His with souls so desirous of serving Him, for neither austerity nor enclosure deters them. May He be blessed and praised forever and ever, amen.

Chapter 27

Treats of the foundation made in the town of Caravaca. The Blessed Sacrament was reserved on New Year's Day, 1576. The monastery is under the patronage of the glorious St. Joseph.

WHILE I WAS AT ST. JOSEPH'S IN AVILA about to leave for the foundation in Beas that was mentioned¹—for the only thing we had still to prepare was the means of transportation—a private messenger arrived from a lady in Caravaca named Doña Catalina.² After hearing a sermon preached by a Father from the Society of Jesus, three young ladies went to her house determined not to leave until a monastery was founded in that town.³ This action must have been something they had already discussed with this lady who is the one who helped them make the foundation. They belonged to the most important families of that town. The father of one of them was Rodrigo Moya, a very great servant of God and a man of much prudence.⁴ Among the three of them they had enough resources to seek to accomplish a

project like this. They learned from the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, who have always favored and helped this work, of what our Lord has done in founding these monasteries.

2. Since I saw the desire and fervor of those souls and that they went so far looking for the order of our Lady, I was moved with devotion and there arose in me the desire to help them carry out their good intention. Learning that Caravaca was close to Beas, I took with me a greater number of nuns than I usually do. My intention was to go there after completing the foundation in Beas. According to the letters these ladies sent, it seemed to me we could come to an agreement. But since the Lord had disposed otherwise, my plans were of little help, as was said when speaking of the foundation in Seville. For they had obtained the license from the council of the Order of Knights in such a way that even though I had made up my mind to go, I had to give up the idea.⁵

3. The truth of the matter is that when I learned in Beas where Caravaca is and saw that it was so out of the way and the road for those who would have to visit the nuns was so bad and that the superiors would be displeased, I had little enthusiasm for making the foundation. But since I had raised the hopes of those ladies, I asked Father Julián de Avila and Antonio Gaytán to go there to see what the place was like and, if they so decided, to cancel the plans. They felt lukewarm toward the project not because of the three who wanted to be nuns but because of Doña Catalina who was mainly responsible for the foundation, for she kept these ladies in a separate room by themselves as though they were already enclosed.

4. These nuns, or better, these who were about to become nuns, especially two of them, were so convinced of their vocation that they knew how to gain the goodwill of Father Julián de Avila and Antonio Gaytán. Before returning, these latter two signed the documents of agreement⁶ and returned leaving the young ladies very happy. They came back so enthused about these women and the place that they never stopped talking about it, nor did they stop talking about the bad road. Since I saw that the agreement had been reached but that the license was delayed in coming, I sent the good Antonio Gaytán there again who for love

of me underwent all the hardship willingly. He and Father Julián de Avila were eager that the foundation be made. The truth of the matter is that they are the ones who should be thanked for this foundation. If they hadn't gone there and reached an agreement, I would not have bothered about it.

5. I sent Antonio Gaytán to put up the turn and the grille in the house where the nuns were going to live until finding another suitable one. This was the house of Rodrigo de Moya, who, as I mentioned,⁷ was the father of one of these ladies, and very willingly allowed them to use a part of his house. Antonio Gaytán remained there doing this work for many days.

6. When they brought the license and I was about ready to depart for Caravaca, I learned from the license that the house would have to be subject to the council of the Order of Knights and obedience given to them, which is something I could not do because we belonged to the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

And thus, another license was asked for that would not have this condition, for otherwise neither there nor in Beas would a foundation be possible. When I wrote to the king, who at present is Don Philip, he granted me the great favor of issuing orders that the license be granted.⁸ The king is so fond of favoring religious who he knows are faithful to their profession that once he had learned of the manner of life in these monasteries and that we follow the primitive rule, he favored us in everything. And thus, daughters, I beg you that special prayer be always offered for his majesty, as is done by us now.

7. Since they had to petition again for the license, I departed for Seville by order of Father Provincial, who was then, and still is, Father Fray Jerónimo Gracián de la Madre de Dios, as was said.⁹ And the poor young ladies were enclosed there until the following New Year's Day. It had been around February when they had sent me a messenger in Avila. The license, then, was obtained in a short time, without any delay. But since I was so far away and involved in so many troubles, I was not able to help them. And I felt most sorry for them, for they wrote to me frequently very distressed, and so I could not bear making them wait any longer.

8. Since it was impossible for me to go because I was so far away and the foundation in Seville was not completed, Father Maestro Fray Jerónimo Gracián, who was the apostolic visitor, as was mentioned, ordered those nuns to go, even though I could not go with them, who had been chosen for the foundation and who were waiting at St. Joseph's in Malagón. I arranged for someone to be prioress who I trusted would fulfill the office very well, for she is far better than I.¹⁰ And taking with them all the provisions, they left with two discalced Fathers of our order.¹¹ Father Julián de Avila and Antonio Gaytán had already returned home some time before, so I did not want them to accompany the Sisters because they were too far away and the weather was so bad, for it was the end of December.

9. When the nuns arrived in the town, they were received with great joy by the people and especially by those women who had been living an enclosed life. They founded the monastery, reserving the Blessed Sacrament, on the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, in the year 1576.¹² Two of the women immediately took the habit. The other one suffered very much from melancholy. It must have been bad for her to live an enclosed life, and how much more so when it was so strict and penitential. She decided to return home to live with one of her sisters.¹³

10. Reflect, my daughters, on the judgments of God and on our obligation to serve Him who has allowed us to persevere until making profession and to live always in the house of God and be daughters of the Virgin. For His Majesty benefited by the good will of this young lady and by her property so that the monastery could be founded, and when the time came for her to be able to enjoy what she had so desired, she was lacking in fortitude and became subject to the melancholic humor. This latter, daughters, we often blame for our imperfections and inconstancy.

11. May it please His Majesty to give us abundant grace, for with this, nothing will prevent us from advancing ever in His service. And may He protect and favor all of us so that this excellent beginning, which He was pleased to initiate in women as miserable as we, may not be lost through our weakness. In

His name I beg you, my daughters and Sisters, that you always ask our Lord for this and that each one who enters in the future bear in mind that with her the observance of the primitive rule of the order of the Virgin, our Lady, begins again and that she must in no way consent to any mitigation. Consider that through very little things the door is opened to very big things, and that without your realizing it the world will start entering your lives. Remember the poverty and hardship that was undergone in obtaining what you now quietly enjoy. If you note carefully, you will see that in part these houses, most of them, have not been founded by men but by the powerful hand of God and that His Majesty is very fond of advancing the works He accomplishes provided we cooperate. From where do you think a useless woman like me, subject to obedience, without even a maravedi, with no one to help me in any way, could get the power for such great works? For this brother of mine, who helped with the foundation in Seville and had the means, courage, and goodness of soul to help, was in the Indies.¹⁴

12. See, my daughters, see the hand of God. Well, it could not be because I am from the nobility that He has given me such honor. In whatever way you want to look at this you will recognize that it is His work. It would not be right for us to undermine it in any way. We must not do so even if it cost us our life, honor, and tranquility. Moreover, we have everything here, for to have life is to live in such a way that there is no fear of death or of any of life's happenings, to have an habitual happiness, as you now all have, and to enjoy this prosperity that cannot be surpassed when there is no fear of poverty, but on the contrary desire for it. Well, to what can the interior and exterior peace that you always enjoy be compared? It is in your power to live and to die with this peace, as you have witnessed in those you have seen die in these houses. For if you always ask God to foster this way of life and you trust not at all in yourselves, He will not deny you His mercy. And if you have confidence in Him and have courageous spirits—for His majesty is very fond of these—you need not fear that He will fail you in anything. Never refuse to accept because they are not wealthy those who ask to become nuns provided they are virtuous and you are pleased with their desires

and talents, and they do not come merely as a remedy for their social situation but come to serve God with greater perfection. God in other ways will provide doubly for that which you might lack because of doing this.

13. I have much experience of this. His Majesty knows well that insofar as I can remember I have never refused to accept anyone because of lack of money, provided I was satisfied with all the rest. The witnesses to this are the many who have been received only for God, as you know. And I can certify that when I received those who brought much wealth I did not feel as great a joy as I did with those I accepted only for God. On the contrary, I had fear about those with wealth, but the poor filled and enlarged my spirit with a happiness so great I wept for joy. This is the truth.

14. Well, if when we had to buy and build houses we got along so well following this procedure, why shouldn't we do so now that we have a place to live? Believe me, daughters, the means by which you think you are accumulating are those by which you will be losing. When the person about to enter has wealth, without any other obligation, it is good that she give it to you as alms instead of giving it to others who have no need of it. For I confess that it would seem to me a lack of love if she didn't do this. But always bear in mind that the one who is about to enter should dispose of her possessions in conformity with what learned men advise her is for the greater service of God. It would be very bad if we were to look for any other good from those who enter this service. We gain much more when she does what she ought for God—I mean with greater perfection—than from all that she brings with her, for none of us is aiming after anything else. Nor may God allow this to happen, but only that His Majesty be served in all and through all.

15. And although I am wretched and miserable, I say this for the honor and glory of God and so that you may rejoice in how these houses of His were founded. Never in any business related to these foundations, nor in anything that happened relative to them, did I do anything or would I have done anything—I mean with regard to these foundations—that I understood to go contrary to the will of God in even one point, and this, too, when I

thought that in order to succeed I would have to cover up my intentions. I proceeded according to what my confessors advised me, for since I have been working on these foundations, my confessors have always been very learned men and great servants of God, as you know. Nor, insofar as I remember, did anything else pass through my mind than to proceed in this way.

16. Perhaps I am mistaken and have done many things wrong without realizing it; and the imperfections are countless. Our Lord who is the true judge knows that my intentions were good, insofar as I could discern concerning myself, I mean. Also, I see clearly that this good did not come from me but from God who willed that this work be done, and because it was His work He favored me and granted this gift. The reason why I'm telling you this, my daughters, is that you may understand how obliged you are and know that so far nothing offensive has been done to anyone. May He who has done everything be blessed and may charity be awakened in the persons who have helped us. May it please His Majesty to protect us always and give us His grace so that we will not be ungrateful for so many favors, amen.¹⁵

17. You have seen, daughters, that we have undergone some trials, although I believe I have written about the least part of them. For it would be tiresome if I had to describe in detail the roads, the rain and snow, and getting lost and, above all, frequently, my very poor health. With regard to this latter it happened to me—I don't know if I mentioned it—that on the first day of our journey from Malagón to Beas I was traveling with a fever and so many illnesses all together that while considering the distance we still had to travel and seeing myself in this condition I remembered our Father Elijah when he was fleeing from Jezebel, and said: "Lord, how can I suffer this? You take care."¹⁶ The truth is that when His Majesty saw me so weak, He suddenly took away my fever and illness. This so happened that afterward when I thought about it I figured that perhaps it was because a priest, a servant of God, was going to enter the order there;¹⁷ at least the exterior and interior illnesses were suddenly taken away. When I had good health, I underwent the bodily hardships with joy.

18. Well, putting up with the many different personalities

one necessarily finds in every town caused no small amount of trouble. And to leave my daughters and Sisters when going from one place to another, was not the smallest cross, I tell you, since I love them so much; especially when I thought I was not going to return to see them again and I saw their great sadness and tears. Even though they are detached from other things, God has not given them the gift to be detached from me, perhaps so that it might be a greater torment to me, for I am not detached from them either, even though I forced myself as much as I could so as not to show it and I reprimanded them. But this was of little help since their love for me is great, and in many ways it is obvious that this love is true.

19. You have heard how it was not just with the permission of our Most Reverend Father General that these foundations were made but that I was ordered under obedience by him afterward to do so.¹⁸ And not only this, but he used to write to me about the great joy each new house that was founded gave him. Assuredly, the greatest relief I experienced in the midst of the trials was to see the happiness this work gave to him, for it seemed to me that by giving him this happiness I was serving our Lord since he is my major superior, and besides this I love him much.

20. That which came about next did so either because His Majesty desired to give me some rest or because the devil was displeased that so many houses were being founded where our Lord was being served. (It was easy to understand that what came about was not the will of our Father General because he had written me not many years before in answer to my request not to found any more houses that he would not stop ordering me to do so because he wanted me to make as many foundations as I had hairs on my head.) Before I came back from Seville, a general chapter was held. In a general chapter one would think they would be concerned about the expansion of the order, but instead the definitory gave me a command not merely to make no more foundations but not to leave the house in which I chose to reside, which would be a kind of prison, for there is no nun who for necessary matters pertaining to the good of the order cannot be ordered by the provincial to go from one place to another, I mean from one monastery to another. And what was

worse and what made me sad was that our Father General was displeased with me, without any reason at all, because of information given by biased persons.¹⁹

Along with this I was told of two other serious calumnies that were raised against me. I tell you, Sisters, so that you will see the mercy of our Lord and how His Majesty does not abandon the one who desires to serve Him. For these calumnies not only failed to make me sad but gave me so great an accidental joy²⁰ that I could not restrain myself. As a result, I'm not surprised at what David did when he went before the ark of the Lord,²¹ for because of my joy which I didn't know how to conceal I wanted to do nothing else at the time. I don't know the reason, for this has never happened to me in all the other great criticism and opposition I have received. Moreover, one of these two calumnies spoken against me was most serious. But the command not to make foundations—aside from the displeasure of our Most Reverend Father General—brought me great tranquility and was what I was often desiring: to end my days in quiet. But this was not what those who devised this were intending. They wanted to inflict on me the greatest sorrow in the world, and perhaps they may have had other good intentions.

21. On occasion, also, the strong opposition and criticism (sometimes offered with good intentions and at other times for other purposes) that I received in making these foundations gave me great joy. But I don't ever remember, no matter how much the hardship, experiencing happiness as great as I did in this instance. For I confess that at other times any one of these three things that came all together would have been a severe trial for me. I believe that my main joy came from my thinking that since creatures repaid me like this I was pleasing the Creator. For I am convinced that he who looks for joy in earthly things or in words of praise from men is very much mistaken, without mentioning the little advantage there is in them. Today people will think one thing, tomorrow another; at one time they will speak well of something; soon they will speak badly of it. May You be blessed, my Lord and my God, for You are unchangeable forever and ever, amen. The one who serves unto the end will live without end in Your eternity.²²

22. I began to write about these foundations by order of Father Maestro Ripalda of the Society of Jesus, as I said at the beginning,²³ for he was then the rector of the College in Salamanca and my confessor. While I was in the monastery of St. Joseph in that city in 1573, I wrote about some of these foundations. But because of my many duties I set the work aside. I did not want to continue, for Father Ripalda was no longer my confessor, and we lived in different places, and also because of the great hardship and trials that what I have written cost me; although since I was always ordered to do so under obedience, I consider them well worthwhile. Though I was determined to write no more, the apostolic commissary, who is now Maestro Fray Jerónimo Gracián de la Madre de Dios, ordered me to finish the account of these foundations. Being wretched in the practice of obedience, I told him of the little opportunity I had and other things that came to my mind and also that the task was very tiring for me on top of all the other things I had to do. Nonetheless, he ordered me to finish them little by little as best I could. This I did submitting in everything to what those who know about these things might want to delete. What is poorly expressed, let them delete, for perhaps what seems to me better will sound bad to them.

I have finished today, the vigil of St. Eugene, the fourteenth day of the month of November in the year 1576 in the monastery of St. Joseph in Toledo. This is where I now reside by order of Father Apostolic Commissary, Maestro Fray Jerónimo Gracián de la Madre de Dios, whom we now have as superior for the discalced friars and nuns of the primitive rule, and who is also visitator for those of the mitigated rule living in Andalusia. May this work contribute to the honor and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ who reigns and will reign forever, amen.

For the love of our Lord, I beg the Sisters and Brothers who might read this to recommend me to our Lord that He might have mercy on me and free me from the pains of purgatory, if I should be there, and let me enjoy Him. Since you will not see this while I am living, may the weariness I experienced in writing it as well as the great desire I had to say something that would be consoling to you, if you are allowed to read it, be of some benefit to me after my death.²⁴

*Chapter 28**The foundation of Villanueva de la Jara.¹*

THE FOUNDATION IN SEVILLE, made more than four years ago,² was the last one. It was the last because of the great persecutions that broke out unexpectedly against the discalced friars and nuns. Although there had been many persecutions before, they were not so extreme. Now the whole undertaking was at the point of collapse. It was clearly seen how much the devil resented this holy beginning, which our Lord had initiated, and also that this was the Lord's own work since it was growing. The discalced friars suffered very much, especially the superiors, from serious false testimony and opposition on the part of almost all the calced Fathers.³

2. These Fathers informed our Most Reverend Father General⁴ in such a way that even though he was a holy man and had given permission for all the monasteries (with the exception of St. Joseph's in Avila, which was the first, for this was founded with the permission of the pope), he was urged to oppose strongly any new foundations among the discalced friars. Toward the monasteries of the nuns, he was always well disposed. And so that I might not be helping the friars make foundations, he was induced into becoming displeased with me, which was the greatest trial I suffered in the work of these foundations, even though I have suffered many. On the one hand, very learned men who were my confessors would not agree that I should stop and counseled me to help toward the growth of the work, pointing out that I clearly rendered service to our Lord and helped toward the increase of our order; and on the other hand, going against the will of my superior was like a death to me. For apart from the obligation I had toward him because he was my superior, I loved him very tenderly and there were many reasons for obeying him. It is true that even though I wanted to please him by obeying this order, I could not because there were apostolic visitators whom I was obliged to obey.⁵

3. A holy nuncio died who greatly promoted virtue and, as a result, esteemed the discalced. Another nuncio arrived who it

seems had been sent by God to test us in suffering. He was a distant relative of the pope, and he must be a servant of God, but he began to take seriously to favoring the calced⁶ and in conformity with the information they gave him about us he was convinced that the right thing to do was to put a stop to these foundations. Thus, he began to act with the greatest severity, condemning those he thought could oppose him by imprisoning them or sending them into exile.

4. Those who suffered most were: Father Fray Antonio de Jesús, who was the one who started the first monastery of discalced friars; Father Fray Jerónimo Gracián, whom the former nuncio made apostolic visitor to the Fathers of the cloth⁷ and with whom the new nuncio was greatly displeased; and Father Mariano de San Benito. I have already mentioned who these Fathers are in writing of the preceding foundations. On other friars, among the more outstanding ones, he imposed penances, although not so severely. He issued many censures to prevent them from carrying on any business.

5. It was obvious that all this came from God and that His Majesty permitted it for a greater good and so that the virtue of these Fathers would be better known. The nuncio appointed a superior from the Fathers of the cloth to visit the monasteries of our friars and nuns,⁸ which would have been a great hardship for us if what he thought was going on had been a fact. Still, the hardship that was suffered was very great. This will be recorded in writing by someone who knows better how to write about it. I am only touching on the matter so that the nuns that are to come will know how obliged they are to advance in perfection, since from that which has cost so much to those who are now living they will benefit free of trouble. For some of the nuns now living have suffered very much in these times from serious false testimony, which grieved me far more than what I was undergoing, for this latter was rather a great delight for me. It seemed to me that I was the cause of this storm, and that if they would have thrown me into the sea, as they did Jonah, the tempest would have stopped.⁹

6. May God who favors truth be praised! And this is what happened here, for since our Catholic king, Don Philip, knew of what was going on and was informed of the life and religious ob-

servance of the discalced, he took the initiative to favor us. Thus, he did not want our cause to be judged by the nuncio alone but gave him four counselors, responsible persons, three of whom were religious, so that our rights would be carefully looked after.¹⁰ One of these was the Father Maestro Fray Pedro Fernández, a person of very holy life, great learning and intelligence. He had been apostolic commissary and visitator of the Fathers of the cloth in the Castile province, and we discalced had also been subject to him. He knew well the truth about how each group lived, for the desire of us all was nothing other than that this be known. And so when I saw that the king had named him, I considered the matter taken care of, as by the mercy of God it is. May it please His Majesty that this all be for His honor and glory.

Although there were many noblemen and bishops who made haste to inform the nuncio of the truth, all this would have benefited little if God had not chosen the king to intervene.

7. We are all very much obliged in our prayers to our Lord, Sisters, to recommend the king and those who have helped this cause. It is the Lord's cause and our Lady's, the Blessed Virgin's, and so I urge you to do this. Well you can imagine, Sisters, what little possibility there was for making any foundations. We were all occupied unceasingly in prayers and penances so that our Lord would preserve the houses already founded if doing so would be for His service.

8. I was in Toledo when these great trials started, which described so briefly will seem small to you but when suffered for so long a time were very great. I had arrived there from the foundation in Seville in 1576. A priest from Villanueva de la Jara brought me letters from the town council there. He came to negotiate with me and ask that I accept as a monastery a shrine in that town dedicated to the glorious St. Anne where nine women were living together. This shrine has a little house nearby where for some years these women were living with so much recollection and holiness that the whole town was moved to seek to help them attain their desires to become nuns. I also received a letter from a doctor, the priest in this town, named Agustín de Ervías,¹¹ a learned man of great virtue. Because of his virtue he was moved to help this holy work as much as he could.

9. It seemed to me that for the following reasons it would have been completely unsuitable to accept this foundation: First, there were so many women, and it seemed to me it would be very difficult for them to adapt to our way of life when they were used to their own. Second, they had almost nothing to live on, and the population of the place is little more than a thousand which is not much help for living on alms. (Although the town council offered to support them, it didn't seem to me to be a stable offer.) Third, they didn't have a house. Fourth, the place was far from where these other monasteries were located. Fifth, although I was told that these women were very good, I had not seen them and so could not verify whether they had the qualities we require for these monasteries. Thus I decided to turn down the proposal entirely.

10. Before doing so, I wanted to speak with my confessor who was Doctor Velázquez, a canon and professor in Toledo, a very learned and virtuous man, who is now bishop of Osma.¹² For it is always my custom never to do anything on my own but rather to seek the opinion of persons like him. When he saw the letters and understood the matter he told me not to turn the proposal down but to answer in a friendly manner, for when God has joined so many hearts for the sake of something, one may suppose that He will be served by it. This I did, for I neither accepted it entirely nor turned it down. They continued entreating and getting influential persons to intercede with me until this year of 1580. My opinion was always that it would be foolish to agree to this request. When I responded I could never give a completely negative answer.

11. It happened that when Father Fray Antonio de Jesús completed his time of exile at the monastery of our Lady of Succor,¹³ he went to preach in Villanueva which is three leagues away. And the present prior of this monastery, Father Fray Gabriel de la Asunción, a person of very good judgment and a servant of God, also came often to this town,¹⁴ for he and Father Antonio were friends of Doctor Ervías, and they began to converse with these holy Sisters. Becoming admirers of their virtue and persuaded by the townspeople and the doctor, they took this matter upon themselves as their own and through letters

tried very hard to persuade me. And while I was at St. Joseph's in Malagón, which is more than twenty-six leagues from Villanueva, this prior came to speak to me about the foundation, giving me an account of what could be done and how after it was made Doctor Ervías would give three hundred ducats income from what he received from his benefice; that permission would be obtained from Rome.

12. This looked very unsure, since it seemed to me that after the foundation was made they would drag their feet saying that the little the Sisters had was quite enough. And then I put forth many reasons, in my opinion sufficient, to convince Father Prior that it would not be suitable to make a foundation, and I said that he and Father Antonio should consider these carefully; and I left the matter on their conscience, thinking that what I had said sufficed for refusing to make the foundation.

13. After he had gone, I considered how much in favor he was of the foundation and that he would persuade the superior we now have, who is Fray Angel de Salazar, to accept it. I wrote to the latter with haste begging him not to give this permission and telling him the reasons. From what he wrote to me afterward, he would not have wanted to give the permission unless the foundation seemed to me a good thing.

14. A month and a half went by, or perhaps a little more. When I thought I had put a stop to the matter, a messenger came with letters from the town council, which took on the obligation to provide for the needs of the monastery, from Doctor Ervías who obliged himself to what I mentioned, and—very enthusiastic ones—from these two reverend Fathers. I found myself very confused. On the one hand, I had great fear of admitting so many Sisters thinking that as usually happens they would band together against those others who would join them; and on the other hand, I did not see a sure means for their support, because that which was offered amounted to nothing very impressive. Afterward I understood that my confusion was from the devil, for even though the Lord had given me so much courage, I had become fainthearted to the point that it doesn't seem I was trusting God at all. But the prayers of those good souls in the end prevailed.

15. One day after I received Communion I was recommending this matter to God as I often used to do. For what made me answer them somewhat favorably was the fear of hindering spiritual progress in souls, for my desire is always to be some means by which our Lord may be praised and that there be more to serve Him. While I was praying in this way, His Majesty reprimanded me sternly, asking me with what treasures that which had been done so far had been accomplished and telling me that I should not hesitate to accept this house, that it would be for His great service and the spiritual progress of souls.

16. Since these locutions from God are so powerful, not only does the intellect understand them but it is enlightened so as to understand the truth, and the will is disposed to the desire to carry them out; and this is what happened to me. For not only was I glad to accept the foundation but it seemed to me that I had been at fault in delaying so long and being tied to human reason when the works I had seen His Majesty do for this sacred religious order were so beyond reason.

17. Having decided to accept this foundation, it seemed to me necessary, for many reasons that occurred to me, that I go with the nuns who were to live there. My human nature resisted very much, for I had arrived in Malagón¹⁵ very sick and have always been so. But since I thought the foundation would serve our Lord, I wrote to my superior to order me to do what he thought best. He sent the license for the foundation and the command that I go personally and bring the nuns of my choice. This latter worried me a great deal since the nuns would have to live with those women who were already there. Praying to our Lord very much over this matter, I took two from the monastery of St. Joseph's in Toledo, one of them for prioress, and two from Malagón, one of them for subprioress.¹⁶ Since we had prayed so much to His Majesty, things turned out very well, which to me was no small matter; for in the foundations that we begin by ourselves alone, the nuns adapt to each other well.

18. Father Fray Antonio de Jesús and Father Fray Gabriel de la Asunción came for us. Given an assurance of help from the town, we left Malagón on the Saturday before Lent, the thirteenth of February in 1580. God was pleased to make the weather

so good and give me such health that it seemed to me I had never been sick. I was surprised and reflected on how very important it is not to consider our weak state of health or any opposition that occurs when we understand that something serves the Lord since God is powerful enough to make the weak strong and the sick healthy. And when our Lord does not do this, suffering will be the best thing for our souls; and fixing our eyes on His honor and glory, we should forget ourselves. What is the purpose of life and health save that they be lost for so great a King and Lord? Believe me, Sisters, you will never go astray in following this path.

19. I confess that my wretchedness and weakness have often made me fear and doubt. But I don't remember that from the time the Lord gave me the habit of a discalced nun, and some time before this, He ever failed to grant me the favor, solely out of His mercy, to conquer these temptations and throw myself into what I understood to be for His greater service however difficult it was. I understand clearly that what I did for my part was little, but God wants no more than our determination so that He may do everything Himself. May He be forever blessed and praised, amen.

20. We had to go to the monastery of our Lady of Succor, already mentioned,¹⁷ which is three leagues from Villanueva, and stay there so as to inform the town that we were coming, which had been agreed upon with these Fathers, and it was right that in everything I obey these Fathers with whom we were traveling. This house stood in a delightfully isolated and solitary spot. And as we approached, the friars came out in procession to meet their prior. Since they were discalced and wore their poor, coarse woolen mantles, they inspired us all with devotion and moved me to tender feelings since it seemed to me that I was present in that flourishing time of our holy Fathers of old. In that field, they appeared to be like white fragrant flowers, and indeed I believe that before God they are, for in my opinion He is authentically served there. They entered the church singing the *Te Deum* with voices very restrained. The entrance to it is underground, as though through a cave, which represented that of our Father Elijah.¹⁸ Certainly, I was feeling so much in-

terior joy that I would have considered a longer journey well worthwhile. I regretted very much that the saintly woman through whom our Lord founded this house was now dead. I didn't deserve to see her, although I had desired to do so very much.¹⁹

21. It seems to me that it would not be an idle thing to tell something here about her life and the means by which our Lord desired that this monastery be founded there. It has been of such benefit to souls in the surrounding area, as I have been told. On seeing the penance that was done by this holy woman, may you realize, my Sisters, how far behind we are and may you try harder to serve our Lord. There is no reason that we should do less, for we do not come from such noble and refined family descent. Although this is not important, I am mentioning it because she had lived a comfortable life in keeping with her status in society, for she was a descendant of the dukes of Cardona and thus she was called Doña Catalina de Cardona.²⁰ After she had written to me a few times, she signed her letter with only the words, "the sinner."

22. Those who will write about her life will recount more in detail the many things that could be said about it before the Lord began to grant her such great favors. But in case you might not come to know of it, I will tell here what some trustworthy persons who knew her told me.

23. While this saintly woman was living among the nobility, she was always very concerned about her soul and did penance. The desire for penance greatly increased in her and also the longing to go where she could be alone to enjoy God and dedicate herself to doing penance without any hindrance. She spoke of this with her confessors, but they did not give their consent. I am not surprised that this seemed madness to them, since nowadays the world is very rooted in discretion and has almost forgotten the great favors God granted to the many holy men and women who served Him in the desert. But since His Majesty always favors authentic desires, enabling one to carry them out, He ordained that she go for confession to a Franciscan Father whose name is Fray Francisco de Torres. I know him well and consider him a saint. For many years he has been living a life of

intense fervor, penance, and prayer, and been suffering many persecutions. He must know well the favors God grants to those who strive to receive them, and thus he told her not to give up but to follow the calling His Majesty granted her. I don't know if these were the exact words, but they must have been something like this since she carried them out at once.

24. She disclosed her plans to a hermit who was living in Alcalá and, without ever telling anyone about them, asked him to accompany her.²¹ They arrived at the place where the monastery now stands, and there she found a tiny cave hardly large enough for her; here he left her. But what love must have been hers since she wasn't worried about what there might be to eat or about the dangerous things that could happen to her, or about the bad reputation she would have when it was discovered that she had disappeared. How inebriated must have been this holy soul, so absorbed in not letting anyone prevent her from enjoying her Spouse. And how determined she was not to love the world, since she thus fled from all its satisfactions.

25. Let us consider this well, Sisters, and reflect on how with one blow she conquered everything. For although what you do by entering this holy religious order, offering your will to God, and professing so continual an enclosure may not be less, I wonder whether, in the case of some, a part of this initial fervor does not pass away and out of self-love we make ourselves subject again to some things. May it please the divine Majesty that this not be so, but that since we imitate this holy woman in desiring to flee from the world we may interiorly stay far away from it in all things.

26. I have heard many things about the harsh austerity of her life, and what is known must be the smallest part of it. She must have treated her body terribly because she lived for many years in that solitude with such great desires to do penance and no one to restrain her. I will mention what some persons heard from her directly as well as what the nuns at St. Joseph's in Toledo heard. She went to visit these latter and spoke with them as candidly as with her own sisters. She spoke thus with other persons, too, for her simplicity and humility must have been great. And as one who was convinced that she had nothing of herself, she

was far removed from any kind of vainglory and she enjoyed telling about the favors God granted her so that through them His name might be praised and glorified. Doing this would be dangerous for those who have not reached this state, for, at least, it will seem that they are praising themselves. But her candidness and holy simplicity must have freed her from this fault, for I never heard anyone accuse her of it.

27. She said that she had been living in that cave eight years and that on many days she ate only herbs and roots from the field, for after the three loaves of bread given her by the hermit who accompanied her were gone, she had no more until met by a little shepherd who was passing by. Afterward, he provided her with bread and flour, with which she made small cakes baked over the fire. This was all she ate, and she did so only on each third day. This fact is very certain, for even the friars who are there testify to it, and this went on after she was already very thin and wasted. Sometimes when she went to speak with the friars about how to found a monastery they made her eat a sardine, or other things,²² and rather than benefit from this she was harmed. She never drank wine as far as I know. She took the discipline with a heavy chain, and it used to last often two hours or an hour and a half. The chains she wore were extremely sharp, for a person told me (a woman)²³ that in going there on pilgrimage she remained for the night and feigning sleep she saw her taking the chains off and cleaning them since they were full of blood. But according to what she told the nuns I mentioned,²⁴ that which she underwent with the devils was greater, for they appeared to her as huge dogs, and jumped up on her shoulders, and at other times as snakes. She had no fear at all of them.

28. After the monastery was built, she still used to go to her cave, sleep there, and remain there except when she attended the Divine Office. And before the monastery was founded she used to go for Mass to that of the Mercedarians,²⁵ which was a quarter of a league away; and sometimes she went on her knees. Her garb was made of coarse cloth, and her inner tunic of rough wool,²⁶ made in such a way that she was thought to be a man.

After these years that she lived there in such solitude, our

Lord desired that her way of life become known, and the people began to venerate her so much that she could not get away from them. She spoke to everyone with great charity and love. As time went on, a greater concourse of people came; and those who were able to speak to her considered themselves lucky. She was so worn out from this that she said they were killing her. There were days when the whole field was almost filled with wagons. After the friars came there, there was no other remedy than for them to have her lifted up high so that she could bless all the people, and with that they were freed of them. After eight years in which she lived in the cave (which was now larger, for it had been made so by those who had gone there), she became so sick that she thought she was going to die, and she suffered it all in that cave.

29. She began to have desires that a monastery of friars be founded there, and these persisted for some time without her knowing from which order they would come. Once while praying before a crucifix she always carried with her, our Lord showed her a white mantle, and she understood that they would come from the discalced Carmelites, and she had never known that there were friars like this in the world. At that time only two monasteries of friars had been founded, Mancera and Pastrana. After this experience, she must have inquired. When she learned there was a monastery in Pastrana and since she had been in the past a close friend of the princess of Eboli, wife of Prince Ruy Gómez, to whom Pastrana belonged, she went there to find out how she might make this foundation which she had been desiring so much.

30. There at the monastery of Pastrana, in the church of St. Peter, for this it is called, she received the habit of our Lady,²⁷ although not with the intention of being a nun or of making profession, for she was never inclined toward being a nun since our Lord was leading her by another path. It seemed to her that if she professed obedience her plan to live in harsh austerity and solitude would be frustrated. All the friars were present when she received the habit of our Lady of Mt. Carmel.

31. In their company was Father Mariano, whom I mentioned in these foundations.²⁸ He told me that he himself had

experienced at the time a suspension or rapture that carried him completely out of himself and that while in this state he saw many dead friars and nuns. Some were beheaded, some had their arms and feet cut off as though they were martyred, for martyrdom is what this vision was pointing to. And he is not the type of man who would tell what he had not seen, nor has his spirit ever been accustomed to these suspensions, for God does not lead him by such a path. Pray to God, Sisters, that this vision will come true and that we will merit in our times to see so great a blessing and be ourselves among the martyrs.

32. From here, that is, from Pastrana, the holy woman of Cardona began to seek the means to found her monastery and for this purpose she went back to the court which she had so eagerly left before. Doing this must have been no small torment; it was a place where she underwent much criticism and trial. When she left the house where she was staying, she wasn't able to protect herself from the crowd. This happened wherever she went. Some cut pieces from her habit, others from her mantle. She then went to Toledo where she stayed with our nuns. All of them have affirmed to me that the odor of sanctity emanating from her was so great that it permeated even her cincture and habit, which she exchanged for another given her by the nuns; it was something to praise God for. And the closer they came to her the greater was this fragrance, even though her manner of dress, because of the intense heat, would rather have caused a bad odor. I know that they wouldn't say anything but the complete truth, and thus they were left with great devotion.

33. In the court and elsewhere they gave her the means for the monastery, and once she obtained the license, it was founded. The church was built at the place where her cave was. Another cave was made for her further away in which she had a tomb carved out,²⁹ and she remained there most of the day and night. She lived this way only a short time, for about five and a half years after the monastery was built. That she lived even as long as she did seemed supernatural because of her harsh, austere life. Insofar as I can remember, she died in 1577. Her funeral services were held with greatest solemnity, for a gentleman named Fray Juan de León³⁰ had great devotion to her and ar-

ranged it all with much care. She is now buried temporarily in a chapel of our Lady, to whom she was extremely devoted, until a church larger than the one they have now will be built to keep her blessed body as is fitting.

34. Great is the devotion they have to her in this monastery, and it seems it remained there and in the surrounding area, especially when they beheld that solitude and cave in which she lived. The friars have testified to me that before she decided to found the monastery, she became so wearied and afflicted at seeing the large number of people coming to see her that she wanted to go to another place where no one would know of her. She sent for the hermit who brought her there so that he might bring her elsewhere, but he was dead. And our Lord who was resolved that this house of our Lady be founded there did not allow her to leave, for as I have said,³¹ I know He is served very much there. The friars have all that is necessary for their way of life, and it is clear that they like to be isolated from people; especially the prior,³² for God also drew him away from a life of much luxury and has repaid him with spiritual consolation.

35. The prior was very charitable toward us. The friars contributed to our foundation from what they had in the church, for since this holy woman was much loved by so many noble persons, their church was well provided with sacred furnishings. I was very much consoled during the time I was there, although this was accompanied by much shame which continues. I saw that the one who had done such harsh penance there was a woman like me, but more delicate because of her background, and not so great a sinner as I. For in this matter there is no comparison between us, and I have received much greater favors of many kinds from our Lord, and that I am not in hell because of my sins is among the greatest of favors. The desire alone to imitate her, if I could, consoled me; but not much, for all my life has passed in desires, but the deeds I do not perform. May the mercy of God help me. In Him I have always trusted through His most sacred Son and the Virgin, our Lady, whose habit I wear through the goodness of the Lord.

36. One day when I had just received Communion in that holy church, very great recollection came over me with a sus-

pension that drew me out of myself. In this suspension, through an intellectual vision, this holy woman appeared in a glorified body and some angels with her. She told me not to grow weary but that I should strive to go ahead with these foundations. I understood, although she did not indicate this, that she was helping me before God. She also told me something else but there is no reason to put it here in writing. I was left very much consoled and with a great desire to work hard, and I hope in the goodness of the Lord that with help as good as are these prayers of hers I will be able to serve Him in some way.

You can see here, my Sisters, how her trials have now come to an end, but the glory she enjoys will have no end. Let us now force ourselves for love of our Lord, to follow this sister of ours. Holding ourselves in abhorrence as she abhorred herself, we will finish our day's journey, for it goes by so quickly and all comes to an end.

37. We arrived in Villanueva de la Jara on the first Sunday of Lent, the feast of St. Barbaciani,³³ the vigil of the feast of the Chair of St. Peter, in the year 1580. On this same day at the time of the high Mass, the Blessed Sacrament was reserved in the church of the glorious St. Anne.³⁴ The city council and some others along with Doctor Ervías came out to receive us, and we got down from our wagons at the church in the town, which was quite far from St. Anne's. The joy of the whole town was so great. It gave me much consolation to see the happiness with which they received the order of the Blessed Virgin, our Lady. We had heard from afar the peal of the church bells. Once we were inside the church, they began the *Te Deum*, one verse sung by the choir and the other played by the organ. When it was finished, they carried the Blessed Sacrament on one portable platform and a statue of our Lady on another, and crosses and banners. The procession proceeded with much pomp. We were in the middle near the Blessed Sacrament with our white mantles and our veils covering our faces, and next to us were many of our discalced friars from their monastery and Franciscans from the monastery of St. Francis that was located there, and one Dominican who happened to be present (even though he was alone it made me happy to see that habit there). Since the distance was great, there were many altars set up along the way. From

time to time the procession stopped and some verses were recited in honor of our order which moved us to great devotion. So did the sight of all of them praising the great God present in our midst and the fact that because of Him they paid so much honor to us seven poor, little discalced nuns who were there. While I was engaged in all these reflections, I became very ashamed in recalling that I was among them and that if they were to do what I deserved they would all turn against me.

38. I have given you so long an account of this honor that was rendered to the habit of the Virgin so that you might praise our Lord and beg Him that he be served in this foundation. I am happier when there is much persecution and many trials, and I tell about them more eagerly. The truth is that these Sisters that were here suffered persecution and trial for almost six years, at least for the five and a half years that they were in this house of the glorious St. Anne. They suffered these in addition to the great poverty and hardship they had in earning their food, for they never wanted to ask for alms. The reason for the latter was that they didn't think the purpose of their being in the monastery was that others might give them to eat. Furthermore, they did great penance, both by fasting often and eating little, and by their uncomfortable beds and very small house, which was a great hardship because of the strict enclosure that they always observed.

39. Their greatest trial, they told me, came from their intense desire to see themselves clothed with the habit. This was a terrible torment to them day and night since they thought they might never see the desire fulfilled, and thus all their prayers, frequently accompanied by tears, were that God might grant them this favor. And whenever some delay came along, they became extremely distressed and increased their penance. They deprived themselves of food in order to pay from their earnings the messengers sent to me and also for the gifts of gratitude, in their poor way, to those who were able to help them in some way. After having spoken with them and seen their holiness, I well understand that it was through their prayers and tears that they obtained the favor to be admitted into the order. And thus I considered it a far greater treasure to have souls like these in

the order than to have a good deal of income, and I hope that the house will prosper.

40. Well when we entered the house, all were inside at the door. Each one was dressed in her individual way, as she was when she entered, and they never wanted to wear the habit of *beatas*³⁵ since they were hoping for this foundation, although what they were wearing was very simple. It appeared from their indifferent manner of dress that they took little care of themselves, and almost all were so thin that their life of great penance was evident.

41. They received us with many tears of great joy. It was obvious that these were not feigned, nor were their great virtues, their joy, humility, and obedience to the prioress. They don't know how to please enough those nuns who came to make the foundation. All their fear was that we might turn around and go back when we saw their poverty and the small size of their house. None of them had acted as superior, but with much sisterly love each of them worked as much as she could. The two oldest took care of business matters when necessary; the others never spoke with anyone, nor did they want to. They had no lock for the door but only a bolt; none of them dared to go to the door; only the oldest answered. They slept very little so as to earn their bread and not lose time for prayer in which they spent many hours—on feast days the whole day.

42. They guided themselves with books by Fray Luis de Granada and Fray Peter of Alcántara. They recited the Divine Office most of the time despite their little ability to read, for only one of them read well. And they did not have identical breviaries. Some used old roman breviaries that were given by priests who no longer used them; others used whatever they could find. And since they did not know how to read, they spent many hours at this. They did not recite the Office in a place where they could be heard by outsiders. God must have accepted their good intention and effort, for they must have said little that was correct. When Father Fray Antonio de Jesús began to guide them, he ordered them to recite only the Office of our Lady. They had their own oven for baking bread. And they did everything with as much harmony as they would have done under a superior.

43. All this made me praise our Lord, and the more I dealt with them the happier I was that I had come. It seems to me that however many the hardships I would have had to go through, I would not have wanted to fail to console these souls. My companions who remained there told me that on the very first days they experienced some opposition, but as they got to know these new Sisters better and learn of their virtue, they felt very happy to remain with them and loved them very much. Great is the power of holiness and virtue. The truth is that even though they met with many difficulties and trials these Sisters bore them well, with the favor of the Lord, because they desired to suffer in His service. And the Sister that does not feel within herself this desire should not consider herself a true discalced nun, for our desires must not be for rest but for suffering in order to imitate in something our true Spouse. May it please His Majesty to give us grace for this, amen.

44. The origin of this shrine of St. Anne was as follows. There lived in this town of Villanueva de la Jara a priest born in Zamora who had been a friar of our Lady of Mt. Carmel. He was a devotee of the glorious St. Anne. His name was Diego de Guadalajara, and he built near his house this shrine in which Mass could be heard. And in his great devotion he went to Rome and brought back a bull with many indulgences for this church or shrine. He was a virtuous and recollected man. He stipulated in his will that after his death this house and all his possessions be used for a monastery of nuns of our Lady of Mt. Carmel and that if this could not be done a chaplain be appointed to say some Masses each week and that if and when the monastery were built there would be no obligation to say the Masses.

45. The property so remained, with a chaplain, for more than twenty years, and the estate diminished in value. When the women began living in the house, they received only the house. The chaplain was in another house that belonged to the same chaplaincy which he will now leave to them along with the rest of the estate which amounts to very little. But the mercy of God is so great that He will not fail to favor the house of His glorious grandmother. May it please His Majesty that He be

always served in it, and may all creatures praise Him forever and ever, amen.

Chapter 29

*Treats of the foundation of St. Joseph of Our Lady of the Street in Palencia. It was made in the year 1580 on the feast of King David.*¹

HAVING RETURNED FROM THE FOUNDATION of Villanueva de la Jara, the major superior² ordered me to go to Valladolid at the request of the bishop of Palencia, Don Alvaro de Mendoza. This was the bishop who had accepted and favored the first monastery, St. Joseph's in Avila,³ and always favors whatever pertains to this order. Since he was transferred from the diocese of Avila to that of Palencia, our Lord inspired him with the desire to found there another monastery of this sacred order. When I reached Valladolid, I was struck down with so bad an illness that they thought I was going to die.⁴ I felt so listless and so unable even to think of doing anything that I could not be persuaded even though the prioress of our monastery in Valladolid who desired this foundation very much was pressing me to go ahead with it.⁵ But neither could I find any basis for doing so because the monastery had to be founded in poverty, and they told me that it could not be sustained because the city was very poor.

2. For almost a year this foundation had been a subject of discussion along with that of Burgos. Previously, I had not been so opposed to it, but now, even though I had not come to Valladolid for any other purpose, I found many obstacles. I don't know whether this was due to my severe illness and the resulting weakness or to the devil who wanted to hinder the good that was done afterward. Indeed, I am surprised and saddened. Often I complain to our Lord about how much the poor soul shares in the illness of the body. It seems the soul can do nothing but abide by the laws of the body and all its needs and changes.

3. One of the great trials and miseries of life, I think, is this

helplessness experienced when there is no strong spirit to bring the body into submission. For if the soul is alert, I don't consider the suffering of illness and pain a problem, even though this may be a trial, for the soul is praising God and accepting this as coming from His hand. But it is a terrible thing on the one hand to be suffering and on the other not to be doing anything. This is especially true if the soul has experienced great desires not to rest interiorly or exteriorly but to occupy itself completely in the service of its great God. It has no other remedy here than patience, knowledge of its misery, and abandonment of itself to the will of God who makes use of it for what He wants and in the way He wants. This is the condition I was in then, although I was already convalescing. But, nonetheless, the weakness was so great that I lost even the confidence God usually gives me when I begin one of these foundations. Everything looked impossible to me. If I had met some person at the time to encourage me, this would have been a great help. But some only added to my fear; others, even though they gave me some hope, did not encourage me enough to help me overcome my faintheartedness.

4. It happened that a Father from the Society came there, named Maestro Ripalda, who had been my confessor some time before and was a great servant of God.⁶ I told him about my situation, that I wanted to consider him to be standing in God's place, and asked him to tell me what he thought about the foundation. He began to encourage me very much. He told me that I was growing old and that this was the reason for my cowardice. But I saw clearly that this was not the reason, for I am older now and do not experience such timidity. And he too must have understood this, but he scolded me so that I wouldn't think God was behind it. I was then considering the foundations of Palencia and Burgos together, and I had nothing for either of them. But this was not the cause of the way I felt, for I am used to beginning with less. He told me that I should by no means give them up. I had been told the same thing a little previously by a provincial from the Society, named Baltasar Alvarez,⁷ but at that time I was well.

5. His words were not enough to get me to make the decision

to go ahead, although they were very helpful. I did not make up my mind completely because either the devil, or as I said,⁸ the illness held me bound; but I felt much better. The prioress at Valladolid assisted me as much as she could because she greatly desired the foundation of Palencia. But since she saw me so lukewarm about it, she too was afraid. Now let the true ardor come, for neither the nations nor the servants of God suffice! Therefore, it is often made clear that it is not I who do anything in these foundations, but the work is His who is all powerful in everything.

6. One day just after having received Communion and in the midst of this vacillation and indecision about making any foundation, I begged the Lord to enlighten me so that I might do His will in everything. The lukewarmness was not of the kind that could ever take away as much as one iota from this desire. Our Lord answered in a kind of reprehensive way: "What do you fear? When have I failed you? I am the same now as I was before. Do not neglect to make these two foundations." O great God! How different are your words from those of men! I was thereby left with such determination and courage that the whole world would not have been enough to oppose me. I began at once to make arrangements for them, and our Lord began to give me the means.

7. I took two nuns with me to go and buy the house. Now even though they told me it was impossible to live on alms in Palencia, I may as well not have been told, because I already saw that it was impossible at that time to make a foundation that could have an income. I knew that since God said I should found one, His Majesty would provide. Thus, although my health had not returned entirely, I decided to go despite the harsh weather. I left Valladolid on the feast of the Holy Innocents in the year that I mentioned,⁹ for a gentleman had given us a house he had rented in which we could live from the beginning of the new year until the feast of St. John the Baptist, for he had gone to live elsewhere.

8. I wrote to a canon of this city even though I did not know him.¹⁰ But a friend of his told me that he was a servant of God, and I became convinced that he would be a great help to us. For

the Lord Himself, as seen in the other foundations, chooses in each place someone to help Him. His Majesty already knows the little that I can do. I sent a message to beg this gentleman to have the house vacated as secretly as possible, for it was occupied, and not to tell the occupant who was coming. For even though some of the nobility showed their good will and the bishop was very eager for the foundation, I saw that the safest thing was to keep it from being known.

9. Canon Reinoso, for that is the name of the one to whom I wrote, did so good a job that not only did he have the house vacated but he provided beds and a plentiful supply of things. We needed them because the weather was very cold and the previous day had been a troublesome one with fog so thick we could hardly see each other. Indeed, we had little rest until we had prepared a place to say Mass the following day, because before anyone was aware of it we had arrived. I have found that this quiet way of arriving is more fitting, for if we begin discussing opinions, the devil disturbs everything; even though he cannot gain, he stirs unrest. This is what we did, for early in the morning, almost at dawn, a priest who came with us, named Porras, a very good servant of God, said Mass. Also with us was another friend of the nuns of Valladolid, named Agustín de Victoria, who had lent me money to furnish the house and with much care had assisted me on the journey.¹¹

10. There were five of us nuns who went to Palencia. With us, as well, was a lay Sister, a companion who has for some time been going about with me. She is a great and discreet servant of God who can help me more than others who are choir Sisters.¹² That night we slept little, although, as I say, the journey had been laborious because of the heavy rains.

11. I was very pleased that the foundation was made on that day since the Office was of King David to whom I am devoted. Immediately that morning I sent word to His Excellency, the bishop, who did not know yet that I was arriving that day. He came at once with the great charity he has always shown us. He told us that he would give us all the bread we needed, and he ordered his administrator to provide many things for us. There is so much that this order owes him, that whoever reads about

these, its foundations, is obliged to recommend him, whether living or dead, to our Lord, and this I ask out of charity. The joy of the people was so great and universal that there was not even one person who disapproved, which was something very unusual. Their knowing that the bishop wanted it contributed greatly to this since he was much loved in that place. The people are among the most gentle and noble that I have ever seen, and so every day I rejoice more in having made that foundation there.

12. Since the house was not ours, we immediately began to negotiate to buy another, for even though this one was up for sale, it was in a very bad place. And with the help I had from the nuns who came, it seemed that we could buy something. Although the amount was small, for that city it was a lot. But if God had not given us the good friends that He did, all would have been to no avail. For the good canon Reinoso brought a friend of his, named Canon Salinas,¹³ of great charity and understanding, and they were both as concerned as if the matter were their own—even more so, I believe—and they were always concerned about that house.

13. There was in the town a shrine that inspired much devotion to our Lady called Our Lady of the Street. The devotion to her in the city and the entire region is great, and many people go there. It seemed to His Excellency and to all the people that it would be good for us to be near that church. It did not have a house attached to it, but there were two nearby which, if we bought, would be enough for us along with the church. The church had to be given to us by both the cathedral chapter and some members of the confraternity, and thus we started to try to obtain it. The cathedral chapter made us a gift of it at once, and although the negotiations with the confraternity were more difficult, the members also agreed. As I have said,¹⁴ if I have ever seen virtuous people in my life, they are the people of this town.

14. Since the owners of the houses saw our interest in them, they began to value them more, and rightly so. I wanted to go to see the houses, and they looked so bad to me that I didn't want them at all, nor did those who came with us. Afterward, it was clearly seen that the devil had a great role to play because it

upset him that we would be there. The two canons who were negotiating about it thought that the houses were far from the cathedral, as they were, but in a more populated area of the city. We finally all decided that those houses were unsuitable for us and that we should look for another. This is what the two canons began to do those days. And they did so with such care and diligence, without failing to look at anything they thought might be suitable, that it made me praise our Lord. They became pleased with one house whose owner was named Tamayo. Some parts of the house were just right for our needs, and it was near the house of a noble gentleman, named Suero de Vega, who helps us very much.¹⁵ He as well as other persons in the district were eager that we make the foundation there.

15. That house was not large enough, but they offered us another along with it, although this other was not the kind that could be easily adapted to the first. In sum, from the information they gave me about it, I desired that we go ahead. But the canons did not want to do so until I saw the houses first. I am so reluctant to go into the town, and I trusted so much in them that they couldn't get me to go. Finally, I went to see them and also those of our Lady of the Street, although not with the intention of buying these latter but only so that the owner of the others would not think that we had no other choice. And they had looked so bad to me, as I have mentioned,¹⁶ and to those who had come with me that now we are surprised that we could have thought them so bad. After that, we went to the other place, determined that those houses would be the ones for us. Although we found many difficulties, we accepted them. Yet the houses were not easy to fix up, for in order to make a church, and even then not a large one, all the good space for living quarters would have had to be taken away.

16. It is a strange thing to be resolved about something. Indeed, it was providential that I trusted little in myself, although that time I was not the only one who was mistaken. In sum, we already had it in mind to buy the houses and no other and to pay what was asked for them, which was high, and write to the owner, who was not in the city but nearby.

17. That I have gone into such detail about the buying of the

houses will seem pointless until it is seen that the devil's aim was to prevent us from buying those of Our Lady of the Street. Every time I think of it, it makes me fear.

18. We were all determined, as I have said,¹⁷ not to buy any other. One day while I was at Mass I became very worried as to whether I was doing the right thing, and a restlessness came over me that left me almost no quiet during the whole Mass. I went to receive the Blessed Sacrament, and immediately after receiving it I heard these words: "This is the one that suits you." They were such that they made me resolve definitely not to buy those I was thinking of but those of Our Lady of the Street.

I began to consider what a difficult thing it would be to do this since the business deal had been much discussed and was so dear to those who had looked after it with such care. The Lord answered me: "They do not understand how much I am offended there, and this will be a great remedy." It occurred to me that perhaps this locution might be false, although I could not believe this, for I recognized clearly from its effects that it was from the Spirit of God. The Lord said to me at once: "It is I."

19. I was left very peaceful and the disturbance I had before was taken away, although I did not know how to remedy what had been done and the many bad things that had been said about the houses, or what to say to my Sisters to whom I had stressed how bad the condition of them was and that we should in no way move there without seeing them. Yet this did not concern me so much, for I already knew that the Sisters would be agreeable to whatever I might do. But I was concerned about the others and their desire. It seemed to me they would take me to be vain and unstable since I changed my mind so quickly, something I greatly abhor doing. All these thoughts were not enough to move me either much or little to give up going to the houses of our Lady, nor did I think about their bad condition. Provided the nuns could prevent as much as one venial sin, the rest was of little importance; and in my opinion any of them knowing what I knew would have agreed with me.

20. I had recourse to the following: My confessor was Canon Reinoso, one of the two who was helping me. I was not confiding to him spiritual matters of this sort because the occasion had

not arisen in which there was need to do so. Since it has always been my custom in these matters, so as to walk along a more secure path, to do what the confessor advises me, I decided to tell him under much secrecy, even though I could not renounce doing what I had heard without feeling much distress. But, in the end, I told him I trusted our Lord would do what I saw at other times, for His Majesty changes the mind of the confessor who is of another opinion so that what He wants is done.

21. I told him first of how the Lord was accustomed to teaching me often in this way and that up to that point many things had happened by which it was understood that these experiences were from His Spirit. I recounted what took place but told him that I would do whatever he thought, even if it would be painful for me. He is very discreet, holy, and shows good judgment in everything, even though he is young.¹⁸ Although he saw that there would be unfavorable comment, he decided not to go against what had been heard. I told him that we should wait for the messenger,¹⁹ and he agreed, for I trusted that God would take care of things. And so it happened, for even though we had agreed to all that the owner wanted and had requested, he asked for another three hundred ducats, which seemed foolish because we were already paying more than enough. In this we saw the hand of God because the sale was very good for the owner, and since the agreement had been made there was no sense to his asking for more.

22. What he did helped matters very much, for we said there would be no end to this. But it didn't help completely, because it was clear that if the house was suitable for conversion into a monastery, three hundred ducats wasn't reason enough to forgo the house. I told my confessor that if he thought we should buy the house of Our Lady of the Street he shouldn't worry about my reputation but tell his companion that I was determined to buy Our Lady of the Street whether it was expensive or cheap, in miserable condition or good. Since his companion is very intelligent and alert, I believe that in seeing so quick a change he suspected something about my experience even though nothing was said to him about it, and so he did not press me any further.

23. Afterward we all saw clearly the big mistake we would

have made in buying the other one. For now we are surprised to see the great advantages the one has over the other, not to mention the main advantage, for it is clearly seen that our Lord and His glorious Mother are served there and that many occasions of sin are being removed. In fact, many night vigils were held there, and since nothing more was there than the shrine, many things could be done that the devil was sad to see taken away. And we were happy to be able to serve in some way our Mother, Lady, and Patroness. And it was very wrong to have done otherwise previously, for we should not have considered any other house. Obviously, the devil was causing blindness in many matters, for there are many conveniences in Our Lady of the Street that would not have been found elsewhere. And all the townspeople were overjoyed for they had been desiring that the monastery be there, and even those who had wanted us to go to the other house were now very pleased with this one.

24. May He who enlightened me in this regard be blessed forever and ever. And He enlightens me thus in anything I manage to do well, for each day I am more amazed at the little talent I have for anything. And don't think that what I'm saying comes from humility, for each day I see it more clearly. It seems our Lord desires me and all others to know that it is only His Majesty who does these works, and that as He gave sight with mud to the blind man, He wants someone as blind as I to do something worth more than mud.²⁰ Certainly, in this whole matter there were things, as I have said,²¹ involving great blindness, and each time I recall it, I would like to praise our Lord again for it. But even for this I'm no good, nor do I know how He puts up with me. Blessed be His mercy, amen.

25. Well these holy canons, friends of the Virgin, immediately made haste to negotiate a contract for the houses and, in my opinion, they got them at a low price. They worked hard, for in each of these foundations God desires that those who help will merit. And I am the one who does nothing, as I have said at other times; and I would never want to stop saying this, because it is the truth. For they worked very hard in getting the house ready, and also gave money for it, because I didn't have any, and together with this they became the guarantors. In other

foundations I had to undergo some anxiety before I found a guarantor, and not for so large an amount as in this instance. And that was understandable; the guarantors had to trust the Lord, for I didn't have a cent. But His Majesty has always granted me a favor which I consider very great; no one has ever lost anything by being a guarantor for me, nor was there any failure to pay back in full.

26. Since the owners of the houses were not satisfied with the two guarantors, the two went to look for the administrator of the diocese whose name was Prudencio. (I don't know if I remember correctly. They tell me this now, for since at that time we called him the administrator, I did not learn his name).²² He is so charitable with us, for we owed him much and still do. He asked them where they were going; they answered they were looking for him to have him sign that guarantee. He laughed and said: "Well now, you ask for a guarantee for so much money in a way like this?" And he signed it at once while sitting on top his mule, which nowadays is something worth pondering.

27. I would not want to fail to sing the praises of the charity that I found in Palencia both in general and in particular. Truly, it seemed to me like being in the early Church, at least it is not usual now to see such a thing in the world. We had no income and they had to provide us with food, and not only were they not opposed to the foundation but they said that God was doing them the greatest favor. And if considered in the light of faith, what they said was the truth, for just to have one more church where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved is a great deal.

28. May He be blessed forever, amen. For as time goes on it is becoming clearly understood that our Lord is served by the fact that the foundation is in that place and that some inappropriate things must have been done there that are no longer done. Since many people went there for the night vigil and the shrine was in an isolated spot, not everyone went out of devotion. The situation is getting better. The statue of our Lady had been displayed with very little reverence. The bishop, Don Alvaro de Mendoza, had a chapel made in the shrine for it, and little by little things are being done for the honor and glory of this glori-

ous Virgin and her Son. May He be praised forever, amen, amen.

29. Well, when the house was ready for occupation by the nuns, the bishop wanted this to take place with great solemnity. And so it did, one day during the octave of the feast of the Blessed Sacrament.²³ He came himself from Valladolid, and the cathedral chapter, the religious orders, and all the people of the city joined him in the procession. There was much music. We all, with our white mantles and veils covering our faces, went in procession from the house where we were staying to a parish that was close to our Lady's house where the statue was brought to meet us, and from there we took the Blessed Sacrament and had it reserved in the church with great and well-organized solemnity. It caused much devotion. Other nuns who were on their way to the foundation in Soria came with us, all carrying candles. I believe that the Lord was very much praised that day in that city. May it please Him that He be praised forever by all creatures, amen, amen.

30. While I was in Palencia, God willed that the discalced Carmelites be separated from the calced. This was done by letting the discalced form their own province, which was all that we were desiring for the sake of our peace and tranquility. At the request of our Catholic king, Don Philip, a very long brief was obtained from Rome for this purpose.²⁴ And thus his majesty by obtaining this brief favored us as much as he did in the beginning. The chapter was held in Alcalá presided over by a reverend Father named Fray Juan de las Cuevas who was then prior of Talavera. He belongs to the Dominican order and was appointed by Rome after having been nominated by his majesty. He is a very holy and prudent man, which was necessary for such a task. The king paid for their expenses, and at his orders the entire university of Alcalá helped them. With much peace and harmony the chapter was held in the College of St. Cyril, that of our discalced friars. They elected Father Maestro Gracián de la Madre de Dios as provincial.²⁵

31. Because these Fathers will write elsewhere about what took place, there is no reason for me to deal with it. I have mentioned the matter because it was while I was engaged in the work

of this foundation that our Lord brought to a conclusion an endeavor that was so important for the honor and glory of His glorious Mother since it concerned her order. She is our Lady and our Patroness. And this for me was one of the great joys and satisfactions of my life. It would take a long time to tell of the trials, persecutions, and afflictions that I have had to undergo during the past twenty-five years, and only our Lord can understand them. Save for anyone who knows the trials that were suffered, one cannot grasp the joy that came to my heart at seeing the matter concluded and the desire I had that everybody praise our Lord and that we pray for this our holy king, Don Philip. By means of him God brought the matter to a happy ending. Had it not been for the king, the devil was so cunning that everything would have collapsed.

32. Now we are all at peace, calced and discalced; no one can hinder us from serving our Lord. Hence, my Brothers and Sisters, since His Majesty has heard your prayers so well, let us make haste to serve Him. Let those in the present who are eyewitnesses, consider the favors He has granted us and the trials and disturbances from which He has delivered us. And those who are to come, when they find everything running smoothly, let them, for love of our Lord, not neglect anything relating to perfection. May that which is said of some orders that praise their beginnings not be said of them. Now we are beginning, and let them strive to advance always from good to better. Let them beware, for the devil through very small things drills holes through which very large things enter. May it not happen that those who are to come say: "These things are not important; don't go to extremes." Oh, my daughters, everything that helps us advance is important.

33. For love of our Lord I beg you to remember how soon everything comes to an end, to remember the favor our Lord has granted us in bringing us to this order and the great punishment that will befall anyone who might introduce some mitigation. Rather, fix your eyes always on the ancestry from which we come, those holy prophets. How many saints we have in heaven who have worn this habit! Let us adopt the holy presumption that with the Lord's help we will be like them. The battle will be

brief, my Sisters, and the end is eternal. Let us set aside these things that in themselves are nothing, using only those that lead us to this end without end, so as to love Him and serve Him more, for He will live forever and ever, amen, amen. Thanks be to God.

Chapter 30

Begins to treat of the foundation of the monastery of the Blessed Trinity in the city of Soria. It was founded in 1581. The first Mass was said on the feast of our Father St. Elisha.¹

WHILE I WAS OCCUPIED with the foundation in Palencia, which was mentioned, they brought me a letter from the bishop of Osma, named Doctor Velázquez.² While he was canon and professor at the cathedral in Toledo and I was still experiencing some fears, I sought to consult him because I knew he was a very learned man and a servant of God. I entreated him urgently to guide my soul and hear my confession. Although he was very busy, I asked him to do so for the love of our Lord. He saw my need and responded so willingly that I was surprised. And I consulted and confessed to him all the time that I was in Toledo, which was a long time. I spoke to him about my soul with complete openness as I usually do. This did me so much good that from then on my fears began to lessen. True, there was another reason for consulting him which I won't go into here. But, in fact, he was very helpful to me because he assured me with passages from Sacred Scripture, which is what suits me most when I am sure that one knows it well. I knew he did and that he lived a good life.

2. This letter was written from Soria where he was at that time. He told me how a lady, a penitent of his there, spoke to him about a foundation of our nuns, which she thought would be a good thing, and that he had told her he would try to convince me to go there to make the foundation. He said I should not disappoint him and that if I thought the foundation was fitting I should let him know and he would send for me. I was very happy

because, in addition to the fact that the place was good for a foundation I wanted to see him and tell him some things about my soul. I had grown to love him very much because of the great progress my soul made under his guidance.

3. The name of this lady who wanted the foundation was Doña Beatriz de Beamonte y Navarra because she is a descendant from the kings of Navarra and is a daughter of Don Francés de Beamonte who was of a noble and pure lineage.³ She was married for some years and had no children, but was very wealthy and for a long time had it in mind to provide for a monastery of nuns. She spoke of this with the bishop and he informed her about the discalced nuns of this order of our Lady. What he told her pleased her so much that she greatly urged him to have the foundation made.

4. She is a mild-mannered person, generous and penitent; in sum, a very great servant of God. She owned a good house that was well-constructed and in a good location in Soria. She told us that she would give it to us along with all that was necessary for a foundation, and this she gave together with a five hundred ducat annuity at twenty-five per thousand.⁴ The bishop promised to give us a very good church with a vaulted ceiling. The church was a parish church⁵ but so close by that we were able to make use of it by means of a covered passageway. The bishop was easily able to make this offer—for he was poor—because there were many churches there, and so he moved the parish to another church. He gave me an account of all this in his letter. I discussed the matter with Father Provincial who was there at the time.⁶ He and my friends thought I should write through a personal messenger. The foundation in Palencia was completed, and I was very happy about the one in Soria for the reasons mentioned.⁷

5. I began to gather the nuns I was going to bring with me. There were seven, for that lady desired that there be more rather than less, in addition to a lay Sister, my companion, and myself. Somebody came for us with a stagecoach, which met our needs, for I had told the bishop that I had to bring two discalced Fathers with me.⁸ And so I brought with me Father Nicolás de Jesús María, a man of great perfection and discretion, a native of Genoa. He was over forty when he received the habit, I think

— at least he's forty now, and it's only a short while since he took the habit—but he has advanced so far in a short time that it seems clear our Lord chose him so that he might help the order during these very troublesome times of persecution.⁹ He has done a good deal. With respect to the others who could have helped, some were exiled, others imprisoned. Since he had no office, little attention was paid to him. For as I mentioned, it was only a short time that he was in the order. Or, God allowed this that there might be some help left for me.

6. He is so discreet that while he was staying in the monastery of the calced Carmelites in Madrid, as though for other business reasons, he dealt with the affairs of the discalced friars in such a disguised manner that the calced friars never knew about it, and so they didn't bother him. We corresponded frequently, for I was in the monastery of St. Joseph's in Avila, and we dealt with a suitable course of action, for this consultation gave him satisfaction. Hence it can be seen what need the order was in since so much attention was paid to me for want, as they say, of good men.¹⁰ It was during this time that I had experience of his perfection and discretion. Thus he is among those in this order whom I love much in the Lord and esteem highly.

7. Well, he and his laybrother companion accompanied us. He had little to do on this journey, for the one sent by the bishop conducted us in much comfort and was a help in finding good inns. When we entered the territory of the bishop of Osma, the people loved the bishop so much that when told that this was one of his projects they directed us to the good inns. The weather was fine. The daily journeys were not long. Thus, little hardship was suffered on this trip; rather, it was a happy one, for hearing the people's praise of the bishop's holiness brought me the greatest joy. We arrived in El Burgo de Osma on the Wednesday before the octave day of the feast of the Blessed Sacrament.¹¹ We received Communion there the following day, which was Thursday, the octave day. Since we could not reach Soria that day we stopped to eat along the way and passed that night in a church, which was not a bad place, because there was no other inn. The next day we heard Mass there and arrived in Soria around five in the afternoon. The holy bishop stood at a

window in his house and blessed us from there, for we passed right by. This was no small consolation for me, since a blessing coming from a bishop and a saint is something to be highly esteemed.¹²

8. That lady, the foundress, was waiting for us at the door of her house, where the monastery was to be established. We were anxious to get inside because of the large number of people. The crowd was nothing new, for everywhere we go there is much curiosity. The world is so fond of novelty that were it not for the veils we wear over our faces, these crowds would be a great trial. But with these veils, we can put up with them. That lady had decorated very well a large hall in which Mass was to be said, for the covered passageway leading to the church given us by the bishop had to be constructed.¹³ On another day, the feast of our Father St. Elisha, Mass was said.¹⁴

9. That lady had prepared perfectly everything we had need of, and she let us use that hall, which was conducive to recollection, until the feast of the Transfiguration¹⁵ when the covered passageway was completed. It was on this feast that the first Mass in the church was said with great solemnity and in the presence of a large congregation. A Father from the Society preached the sermon, for the bishop had returned to El Burgo de Osma.¹⁶ The bishop never loses a day or an hour without working; although his health was not good, for he had lost his vision in one eye. This was my affliction in Soria, for it saddened me that the vision that was so beneficial in the service of the Lord should be lost. These are God's judgments. He must have allowed this so that His servant might gain, for the bishop did not work any less than before, and so as to test His servant's conformity with His will. The bishop told me it caused him no more distress than if it had happened to his neighbor and that sometimes he reflected that it would not grieve him if he lost sight in the other eye as well because this would allow him to live in a hermitage serving God without any other obligation. And at times he used to tell me that before becoming a bishop he had always felt called to be a hermit, and he had almost decided to give up everything and go off to become one.

10. I could not bear the thought of this since I thought he was

of great benefit to the Church of God, and so I wanted him to have the office he now holds, although the day in which he was appointed bishop I felt a very great disturbance, since he sent me word immediately, as though I saw him weighed down with a heavy burden. I could neither help myself nor find peace, and I went to the choir to recommend him to the Lord. His Majesty gave me peace at once, telling me that He would be very much served by him, and this is what is really happening. Despite the illness in his eye and many other very painful illnesses and his everyday work, he fasts four days a week, and does other penances. His table consists of little that is gratifying. When he makes his visitations, he always goes on foot. His servants find this hard to put up with and complained to me about it. They must either be virtuous or not stay in his house. He has little trust in allowing important business to be handled by his administrators, and even, I think, any business; but he handles everything himself. In the beginning, for two years, he underwent the most savage persecutions there from false testimony. I was amazed because in matters of justice he is a man of integrity and rectitude. Now these persecutions are diminishing, although his persecutors had gone to the royal court and wherever they thought they could do harm. Since the good he is doing throughout the whole diocese is becoming known, these persecutions have little effect. And he has borne all of this with such perfection that he has confounded his persecutors, doing good to those he knew were doing evil to him. However much he has to do, he always finds time for prayer.

11. It seems I am becoming absorbed in praising this holy man, but I have said little. Nothing has been lost since I have mentioned this in order that it be known who is responsible for the foundation of the Blessed Trinity of Soria and also for the consolation of those who are to come, for those who are now here know the story well. Although he did not provide the income, he gave us the church and inspired this lady with the idea of the foundation, and, as I have said,¹⁷ she has a great christian spirit and is virtuous and penitential.¹⁸

12. Well, then, once we had taken possession of the church and prepared what was needed for the enclosure, it was neces-

sary for me to go the the monastery of St. Joseph in Avila, and thus I departed immediately in the midst of very great heat along a road that was unfit for wagons.¹⁹ A prebendary from Palencia, named Ribera, accompanied me.²⁰ He was the one who had been a great help in the work involving the covered passageway and in everything. The reason for this was that Father Nicolás de Jesús María left immediately after drawing up the contract, for there was great need of him elsewhere. This Ribera had certain business to attend to in Soria, and so he came with us. From then on, God gave him so much willingness to do good for us that he can be recommended to His Majesty as a benefactor of the order.

13. I didn't want anyone else to come with my companion and me,²¹ because this Ribera is so solicitous that he was enough for me, and the less noise there is on my journeys the better I feel. On this journey I paid well for the good trip I had in going to Soria, for, although the guide knew the way to Segovia, he did not know the wagon route. Thus, he led us into places in which we often had to get down from the wagon, and they almost had to carry it past some steep precipices. When we hired guides, they led us along the good roads and then, saying they had other things to do, abandoned us shortly before we came upon the bad roads. Prior to our arrival at an inn, about which we had not been sure, we had undergone much from the hot sun and from the many incidents in which the wagon turned over. I felt sorry for the prebendary who came with us. For now that we were told we were on the right road, we had to turn back and undo what we had done. But he was so rooted in virtue that it doesn't seem to me I ever saw him angry, which amazed me very much and made me praise our Lord, for when one is rooted in virtue, the occasions of sin are of little consequence. I praise the Lord for how He was pleased to bring us safely through that journey.

14. We arrived at St. Joseph's in Segovia on the vigil of St. Bartholomew.²² Our nuns had been worried because of the delay, for since the roads were so bad, the delay was long. There they provided us with every comfort, for God never gives me a trial without repaying for it immediately, and I rested for eight

days or more. But this foundation was made with so little hardship that there is no reason to pay any attention to the hardship of this return journey, because it was nothing. I came back pleased since it seemed to me, and I hope in His mercy, that Soria is a place where God will be served because the foundation is there, as is already becoming evident. May He be blessed and praised from age to age, amen. Thanks be to God.

Chapter 31¹

Begins to treat in this chapter of the foundation of the glorious St. Joseph of Saint Anne in the city of Burgos. The first Mass was said April 19, the octave day of Easter, in 1582.

FOR OVER SIX YEARS some members of the Society of Jesus, very conscientious, experienced, learned, and spiritual, were telling me that our Lord would be greatly served if a house of our sacred religious order were founded in Burgos. The reasons they gave for such a foundation made me begin to desire it. On account of the many trials within the order and in the other foundations, there had been no opportunity to attempt a foundation in Burgos.

2. In the year 1580, while I was in Valladolid, the Archbishop of Burgos passed through. Having been bishop in the Canary Islands, he was afterward appointed to the diocese of Burgos and at the time was going there.² I asked the bishop of Palencia, Don Alvaro de Mendoza, to ask him to give us permission for a foundation, and he said he would gladly ask him. Since he thinks our Lord is served in these houses, he is very pleased when one is founded. I have already spoken of how much Don Alvaro favors this order, for while bishop of Avila he accepted the first monastery of St. Joseph and always afterward has shown us much favor and considered the affairs of this order as his own, especially those about which I consult him.³

3. The archbishop did not want to enter the city of Valladolid but stayed in the monastery of St. Jerome.⁴ There the bishop of Palencia had a great feast prepared for him and went to dine

with him and invest him with a cincture, or I don't know what the ceremony was, that would make him an archbishop.⁵ It was there that Don Alvaro asked of him the permission for me to found a monastery in Burgos. The archbishop said that he would grant it gladly because even when he was in the Canary Islands he had desired and tried to get one of these monasteries, for he knew me personally and came from a place where one of our monasteries was located, and thus he knew how our Lord was served in them. As a result, the bishop of Palencia told me the foundation would not fail for want of a license, for the archbishop had been very pleased about the project, and that since the Council requires the permission of the bishop but not that it be given in writing, the license could be considered as granted.⁶

4. In speaking previously of the foundation of Palencia, I mentioned the great reluctance I had to making a foundation at that time because of the serious illness from which I was suffering. They had thought I would not live, and I had still not recovered.⁷ Yet illness does not usually affect me so much when I see that something is for the service of God, and thus I don't know the reason for my feeling so much repugnance as I then did. For if the reason had been scarcity of means, I had fewer in other foundations. To me, after I had seen what was to take place, the cause seemed to be the devil. And what has happened each time that there has been some trial in one of these foundations is that our Lord has always helped me with locutions and with deeds since He knows how miserable I am. I have thought, at times, how in some foundations in which there have been no trials, His Majesty didn't warn me about anything. The former is what happened here, for since He knew what I would have to undergo He immediately began to encourage me. May He be praised for everything! Thus, in respect to this foundation, as was mentioned in regard to that of Palencia,⁸ for both foundations were being discussed together, He asked, as though making a reprimand, what I was afraid of and when He had failed me: "I am the same; do not fail to make these two foundations." Since the courage these locutions have left in me has been mentioned, there is no reason for mentioning it again here. Immediately, all hesitation was taken from me. This makes it seem that

the cause was not illness or old age. Thus I began to make plans for both, as was mentioned.

5. It seemed better to make the foundation in Palencia first, since it was closer, the weather was harsh, Burgos was so cold, and so as to please the good bishop of Palencia; and this is what was done, as was mentioned.⁹ Since, while in Palencia, the request came for a foundation in Soria, it seemed better—for in Palencia everything was finished—to go there first and then to Burgos.¹⁰

The bishop of Palencia thought that an account should be given to the archbishop of what was taking place, and I begged him to do so. After I went to Soria, the bishop sent a canon, named Juan Alonso, from Palencia to the archbishop for no other purpose than that. And the archbishop wrote to me with much love of how he desired my coming, discussed the matter with the canon, and wrote to the bishop of Palencia submitting the matter to him, saying that what he did was because he knew the people of Burgos and knew that their consent was necessary in order to make the foundation.

6. In short, his conclusion was that I should go there and discuss the matter first with the city and that if the city would not give the permission he would give it to me because he was not going to let them tie his hands; and that he had witnessed the foundation of the monastery in Avila, which was the first, and remembered the great turmoil and opposition there¹¹ and that he wanted to prevent this from happening in Burgos; and that it was not suitable to found a monastery unless with an income or with the consent of the city; that it would not be expedient for me and that that was why he was mentioning this.

7. The bishop considered that the deed was as good as done, and rightly so because the archbishop said I should come, and thus he sent me word that I should go. But my impression was that the archbishop lacked enthusiasm. I wrote to him thanking him for the favor he granted me but telling him that it seemed to me it would be worse to make a foundation against the will of the city than without asking them permission for it and that this would put His Excellency into more conflict (it seems I guessed the little help I would get from him if there were some opposi-

tion), and that I would try to obtain the permission from the city even though I knew this would be difficult because of the contradictory opinions usually held in matters like this. And I wrote to the bishop of Palencia begging him that since summer was almost over and my illnesses were too many for me to be living in so cold a place we should let the idea rest for the time being. I did not express my doubts about the archbishop because the bishop was already displeased with him on account of the obstacles he was setting up after having shown so much willingness, and I did not want to cause some discord between them, because they were friends. Thus I went from Soria to Avila very unconcerned about going to Burgos so soon, and my going to the house of St. Joseph in Avila was very necessary for certain reasons.¹²

8. There lived in this city of Burgos a holy widow named Catalina de Tolosa, a native of Vizcaya. I could go on at length telling about her virtues, her penance as well as her prayer, her generous almsgiving and charity, her good intelligence and courage.¹³ She had given two of her daughters as nuns to our monastery of the Conception in Valladolid, I believe four years ago, and two others to Palencia, for she had been waiting that this latter foundation be made, and she brought them before I left.

9. All four turned out as one would expect of daughters brought up by such a mother, for they seemed to be no less than angels. She gave them good dowries and a full supply of other things, for she is very generous. Everything she does, she does to perfection; and she can do it because she is rich. When she came to Palencia we were so certain of the permission of the archbishop of Burgos that it didn't seem there would be any reason to delay, and thus I asked her to look for a house to rent for me so that we could make the foundation and that she provide us with some grilles and turns and charge everything to me. The thought never passed through my mind that she would spend anything of her own but only lend to me. She desired the foundation so much that she was extremely sorry to see it being set aside for awhile. And thus I returned to Avila, as I have said,¹⁴ and was very unconcerned about dealing with the foundation at

that time, but she was not so unconcerned. Thinking that all that was needed was permission from the city, she began to try to get it without telling me anything.

10. She had two neighbors, a mother and daughter, persons of high social status and very good servants of God who desired the foundation greatly. The mother, whose name was María Manrique, had a son who was a magistrate and whose name was Don Alonso de Santo Domingo Manrique. The daughter's name was Doña Catalina. Both mother and daughter discussed the matter with him so that he might seek permission from the city council. He spoke to Catalina de Tolosa asking what he should say about financial backing, for they wouldn't give the permission if there were none. She said, and this she did, that she would take on herself the obligation of giving us a house, if we had none, and also food. With this promise he presented a petition signed in his name. Don Alonso presented it with such skill that he obtained the permission from all the magistrates and from the archbishop, and he brought her the license in writing. As soon as she had begun dealing with the matter, she wrote to me that she was negotiating about the foundation. I thought she was joking because I know how reluctant people are to accept a monastery founded in poverty, and since I did not know, nor did it enter my mind, that she had obligated herself to provide for it, I thought that much more was needed.

11. Nevertheless, one day within the octave of St. Martin while I was recommending the foundation to our Lord, I thought that it could be made if the license were obtained. I couldn't bear the thought of going to a place as cold as Burgos with so many illnesses which would be aggravated by the cold. It would have been rash to make such a long journey just after finishing such a rough one, as I have said,¹⁵ in coming from Soria; nor would Father Provincial allow me to do so. I was reflecting that the prioress of Palencia could easily go,¹⁶ for since everything was in order, there was now nothing to do. While I was thinking about this and very determined not to go, the Lord spoke to me in the following words in which I saw that the license was already given: "Don't pay attention to the cold weather for I am the true warmth. The devil uses all his strength to hinder that

foundation; use yours with my help so that it may be realized and do not fail to go in person, for great good will be done.”¹⁷

12. With these words I changed my mind again, for although my human nature sometimes finds these trials distasteful, my determination to suffer for this great God does not lessen. Thus I told Him not to pay any attention to my feelings of weakness when He orders me to do what would please Him, for with His help I would not fail to do it. There was cold weather and snow at the time. That which daunted me most was my lack of health, for when I have my health everything seems easy to me. This lack of health was what very often tired me out on this foundation. The cold was not bad, at least from what I felt, for in truth it seems I felt as much when I was in Toledo. The Lord had well fulfilled His words about this cold.

13. Within a few days they brought me the license, along with letters, from Catalina de Tolosa and her friend Doña Catalina,¹⁸ urging me to hurry, for they feared lest some mishap might occur. At that time the order of the Victorines¹⁹ came there to make a foundation; and the calced Carmelite friars were there for a long time trying to make a foundation; afterward, the Basilians came. That so many of us had come together at the same time was a great obstacle and something to keep in mind, but also something to praise our Lord for because of the great charity of this city. For the city gave them the licenses very willingly even though it was not enjoying its usual prosperity. I have always heard the charity of this city praised, but I had never thought it was as great as it is. Some favored some orders; others favored others. But the archbishop considered all the troubles that could arise and opposed these other foundations thinking that they would be harmful to the orders founded in poverty which would then be unable to survive. Perhaps these very orders influenced him or the devil invented this so as to remove the great blessing that God brings about wherever there are many monasteries, for God has the power to sustain many as well as few.

14. For this reason, these holy women were urging me so much that I would have gone at once were it not for the business I had to attend to. I was considering how much more obligated I was to these women who were so diligent, and not to lose this opportunity through my own fault.

The locution I had heard implied that there would be much opposition. I could not understand from where it would come, for Catalina de Tolosa had already written me assuring us of the house in which she was living for our foundation and that the city was in accord and the archbishop also. I could not understand from whom this opposition to be stirred up by the devils would come, for I never doubted that the words I heard were from God.

15. In short, His Majesty gives more light to superiors, for when I wrote to Father Provincial about the foundation of which I had heard in the locution, he did not forbid me but asked if I had got permission from the archbishop in writing.²⁰ I wrote about this to Burgos. They answered that they had spoken with him of how they had asked permission from the city and that he was pleased. With this and all the things he had said concerning the foundation, it didn't seem there was any reason to doubt.

16. Father Provincial wanted to accompany us on this foundation. He did so partly because he was unoccupied at the time, since he had finished preaching the Advent series, and had to visit Soria which he had not seen since its founding and which was not much out of the way; and partly because he wanted to look after my health on the journey, for the weather was harsh, and I, old and sick; and they think my life is somewhat important. Certainly this was the providence of God, for the roads were so flooded from the heavy rains that he and his companions were very necessary to guide us along the way and help pull the wagons out of the mire. This was especially so on the trip from Palencia to Burgos, which was a very daring one to make at that time. True, our Lord told me that we could go without harm, that I should not fear, that He would be with us; although I did not tell this then to Father Provincial. But these words consoled me in the great hardships and dangers that we were going through. There was special danger in a river crossing near Burgos called Paso de los Pontones. The rain had been so heavy and had lasted so long that the water flooded the bridge. As a result, the bridge could not be seen nor could we see where to pass, but all was water, and everywhere it was very deep. In sum, it was a great imprudence to cross there, especially with wagons, for just by veering a little from the course all would have been lost. In fact, one of the wagons did get into a dangerous situation.²¹

17. We had hired a guide in an inn who knew that crossing; but, certainly, it was a very dangerous one. And, oh! The inns! There was no possibility of making a full day's journey in one day because of the bad roads. The wagons usually got stuck in the mud and other mules had to be used to help pull the wagons out. The Fathers who came with us had to undergo a great deal because it happened that the muleteers we hired were young and careless. Going with Father Provincial was a great relief because he took care of everything and has such a peaceful disposition that it seems no hardship weighs him down. Thus, what was difficult he made so easy that it seemed to be a small matter—although not the crossing of the bridge, which frightened us all very much, for if seeing us enter this world of water without a road or a barge made me fear after all the strength our Lord had given me, what must have been the fear of the nuns who accompanied me? We were eight nuns: two who will return with me, and five who are to remain in Burgos, four of them choir Sisters and one lay Sister.²² I don't think I've yet mentioned Father Provincial's name. His name is Fray Jerónimo Gracián de la Madre de Dios.²³ I have spoken of him at other times. I was making the journey with a severe sore throat, which I caught on my way to Valladolid, along with a fever that had not left me.²⁴ Eating was very painful. This prevented me from enjoying the good things that happened during the journey. This illness has remained with me until now, the end of June, although considerably less severe, but still very painful. All the nuns were happy on the journey; once the danger was over, they found recreation in talking about it. For those who usually practice obedience as do these nuns, it is a great thing to suffer in obeying.

18. It was through this rough journey and heavy rain that we reached Burgos. Before entering the city, our Father wanted us to go first to visit the holy crucifix²⁵ and recommend our foundation to the Lord and wait for nightfall, for it was early when we arrived. It was a Friday, January 26, the day after the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. It had been decided that the foundation be made immediately, and I had brought my letters from Canon Salinas for his relatives and friends strongly urging them to favor this foundation. (Canon Salinas, the one I men-

tioned in discussing the foundation in Palencia,²⁶ comes from this city and from an important family. He worked just as hard for this foundation as for that of Palencia.)

19. And favor it, they did. Immediately, the next day, the whole city council came in a body to see me, for they did not regret the permission they had given but rather were glad that I came and wanted me to tell them what they could do for me. If we had any fear, it was of the city. Thus we considered that now everything would go easily. Although no one knew of our coming, we thought of making it known to the archbishop so that the first Mass could be said at once as was done in almost all the other foundations. But because of the very heavy rain that was falling when we reached the house of the good Catalina de Tolosa, we did not do so.

20. That night we rested in the great comfort that this holy woman provided for us. But it proved troublesome for me. She had a large fire so as to dry us out. Although there was a chimney, the fire caused me so much harm that the next day I couldn't raise my head. So, through a window with a grate covered by a veil, I spoke with those who came to visit me. Since it was a day in which I had to attend to business matters, I was very embarrassed.

21. Early that morning, Father Provincial went to seek the blessing of His Excellency, for we thought there would be nothing more to do. He found that the archbishop was very disturbed and angry because I had come without his permission, acting as though he had not ordered me to come or had never discussed anything about the foundation. Thus he spoke to Father Provincial extremely angry at me. When finally he conceded that he had ordered me to come, he said that he meant I should come alone to discuss the matter—but that I came with so many nuns! God deliver us from the distress it caused him! There was little use telling him that once we had the permission of the city, as he had asked of us, nothing else was left to be done than simply make the foundation and that the bishop of Palencia had told me (for I had asked him if it would be good that I come without letting the archbishop know) that there was no reason for asking the permission because the archbishop had

already said how much he desired the foundation. This is the way the things happened, and they did happen in this way because God wanted the house to be founded. The archbishop himself acknowledged this afterward. If we had openly informed him, he would have told us not to come. He ended the visit with Father Provincial by telling him that if we did not have an income and our own house he would in no way grant the license; we could easily return to where we came from. And the roads were so good and the weather so beautiful!

22. O my Lord, how certain it is that anyone who renders You some service soon pays with a great trial! And what a precious reward a trial is for those who truly love you if we could at once understand its value! But we did not then want this reward because it was making everything impossible. The archbishop made still more demands: that what would be used for income and buying the house could not be taken from what the nuns brought with them. Since a thought like this had never even entered our mind—especially in these times—everybody thought that there was no chance whatever for the foundation. But not I, for I was always certain that everything was working for the best, that the devil was setting snares so as to hinder it, and that God would accomplish his designs. Father Provincial returned, nonetheless, very happy, for he was not at that time disturbed. God so provided, and He provided also that Father Provincial would not be annoyed with me for not having obtained the archbishop's permission in writing as he had told me to do.²⁷

23. Some of the friends and relatives to whom Canon Salinas had written, as I mentioned,²⁸ had come to see me, and some of them had come right away. They thought the archbishop should be asked for permission to have Mass in the house so that we would not have to go out into the streets, which were very muddy; and for us to go out discalced was thought to be inappropriate. There was in the house, which had been used for ten years by members of the Society of Jesus when they first came to Burgos, a suitable room that had served as a chapel. With this we thought no obstacle would stand in the way of taking possession there until we had a house. Never were we able to get the archbishop to let us have Mass there, even though two canons went to beg

him for it. The most they got from him was that once we had an income, the foundation could be made there until we bought a house. And he said that in order to buy a house we would have to have guarantors who would pay and that we would have to leave the place where we were staying. These guarantors we found at once, for the friends of Canon Salinas offered to do this, and Catalina de Tolosa provided the income for the foundation.

24. It took more than three weeks to decide on the amount of money, how and from where it would come. During this time we could not hear Mass; only very early on feast days. And I, with a fever and very ill. But Catalina de Tolosa did everything so well, because she was so generous and showed so much good will, that she provided us all, in a room where we were secluded, with food for a month, as though she were the mother of each one. Father Provincial and his companions were given lodging in a house of one of his friends, named Doctor Manso,²⁹ who had been a classmate and was now the canon preacher at the cathedral. Our provincial was very impatient about being detained there so long, but he did not know how he could leave us.

25. Once there was an agreement about the guarantors and the income, the archbishop ordered that the document be given to his administrator, and said that the matter would be taken care of at once. The devil could not leave off tempting the administrator. We thought there would be nothing to cause a delay and that, after we spent almost a month in trying to meet the demands of the archbishop, the administrator would be pleased with what had been done. After examining the document very carefully, the administrator sent me a memorandum saying that the license would not be given until we had a house of our own and that the archbishop did not want the foundation to be made in the house in which we were staying because it was damp and there was too much noise in the street. And with regard to the guarantees made on the property, I don't know what complications and other things he brought up, as though we were just then beginning the whole matter. And he said that he would have no more to say about this, and that the house must satisfy the archbishop.

26. When Father Provincial saw this, he was very upset as

were all the nuns. In order to buy a site for a monastery much time is obviously required, and he was annoyed at seeing us go out for Mass. Even though the church was not far³⁰ and we heard the Mass in a chapel without anyone seeing us, this situation was a very great hardship for His Reverence and us. By that time, I think, he had made up his mind that we should go back. I could not bear the thought of this when I remembered that our Lord told me that as His instrument I should try to make the foundation, and I was so certain that it would be made that almost nothing caused me distress. My only distress was for Father Provincial. Since I didn't know how much his friends were going to help us, as I shall mention later, I was very sorry that he had come with us. While I was experiencing this affliction (and my companions were also very afflicted, but I didn't mind theirs as much as I did Father Provincial's), but not engaged in prayer itself, our Lord spoke these words to me: "Now Teresa, hold fast." With these words, I tried with more spirit to get Father Provincial to leave and let us remain (and His Majesty must have given him the same spirit), for Lent was approaching and he had to go to preach.³¹

27. He and his friends gave orders that some rooms in the hospital of the Conception be given to us, for the Blessed Sacrament was reserved there and Mass was said each day. This made the provincial somewhat satisfied. But there was no small struggle in getting this, for one of the rooms, which was a good one, had been rented by a widow of this city, and she did not want to let us use it even though she was not going to move there for another half year. It also upset her that one of the rooms they had given us on the top floor, which had only the bare tiles of the roof for a ceiling, had an entrance to her room. She was not satisfied with having the key to the lock on the outside but she also nailed up the entrance from the inside. Furthermore, the hospital confraternity was afraid that we were going to take over the hospital, which was something absurd, but God wanted us to merit more. They made Father Provincial and me promise before a notary that if they told us to leave we would have to do so at once. It was this promise that was the most difficult thing for me to do, for I feared the widow, who was rich and had relatives,

that she would make us leave on one of her whims. But Father Provincial, who was more circumspect, wanted us to do all they asked so that we could go there immediately.

28. They gave us no more than two rooms and a kitchen. But a great servant of God, named Hernando de Matanza, was in charge of the hospital and gave us two other rooms for a parlor. He showed us great charity, and he does so to all, for he does much for the poor. Francisco de Cuevas,³² who is the postmaster of this city, also showed us great charity, for he was much involved with this hospital. He has always helped us when there was need.

29. I have mentioned the names of those who were our first benefactors because it is right that the nuns living now, and those who are to come after, remember them in their prayers. The founding benefactors should be remembered even more. Although at first it was not my intention to count Catalina de Tolosa among these latter, nor did it enter my mind, she has merited by her good life in the service of our Lord that He so ordain things that the title of founding benefactress cannot be denied her. Apart from her paying for the house, for we would have had no means of doing so, she bore the indescribable cost of all these rebuffs of the archbishop. Her deepest affliction was the thought that the foundation might not be made, and she never tired of doing good for us.

30. This hospital was very far from her house. She visited us almost every day with great charity and sent us all that we needed. Because of this, the people never stopped making critical comments to her, so that if it were not for her courage, these would have been enough to make her give up the whole thing. To see what she was suffering caused me great pain. Even though she hid it most of the time, at other times she could not conceal it, especially when these comments affected her conscience. She is so conscientious that, however great were the occasions of sin that some persons provided for her, I never heard her speak a word that was offensive to God. They told her that she was on her way to hell and asked how she could do what she was doing since she had children. Everything she did was with the advice of learned men. Even if she would have wanted to do otherwise,

I would not have consented for anything in the world to her doing something she should not do, even if it would have meant my giving up a thousand monasteries, to say nothing of just one. But since the business matters concerning the foundation were kept secret, I am not surprised at what was in the minds of the people. She answered with prudence, for she has a great deal of it, and suffered the remarks in such a way that it truly seemed God was teaching her and gave her the ability to please some and bear with others. And He gave her the courage to put up with everything. How much more courage for doing great things do the servants of God have than do those of high nobility if they are not His servants; although she, being of noble descent, is not without much nobility in her background.

31. Well to return to what I was dealing with,³³ once Father Provincial had us in a place where we could hear Mass and observe enclosure, he had the heart to go to Valladolid where he was to preach. Yet he was distressed at not seeing in the archbishop any hopeful sign that the license would be granted. Although I always insisted that it would be given, he could not believe this. And, certainly, there were many reasons for his not believing this which need not be mentioned here. If he had little hope, his friends had less, and they made him more discouraged.

I was more relieved to see him gone because, as I have said,³⁴ the greatest suffering I had was to see his. He left us the instructions to find a house that we could own, which was something very difficult because until then not even one house was found that was for sale. Our friends, especially those of Father Provincial's,³⁵ were given greater charge over us, and all agreed not to speak a word to the archbishop until we had a house. The archbishop always said that he desired this foundation more than anyone. And I believe it, because he is such a good Christian that he wouldn't speak anything but the truth; but in his deeds it didn't appear that he desired this since he demanded things that seemed impossible for us to comply with. This was the devil's scheme to prevent the foundation. But, O Lord, how obvious it is that You are powerful, for the very scheme the devil used to prevent it, You used to do something better. May You be blessed forever.

32. From the vigil of St. Matthias, when we began living in the hospital, until the vigil of St. Joseph³⁶ we were conferring about this and that house. There were so many obstacles that we could not buy any of those that were for sale. I was told of one house owned by a gentleman, which had been up for sale for many days, and even though so many religious were looking for a house, God was pleased that none of them found it suitable. Now, they are all surprised, and some really sorry about this. Two persons had spoken to me about the house. But there were so many who spoke badly of it, that I paid no attention to it, thinking it would be unsuitable.

33. One day I was speaking with Doctor Aguiar, who I said was a friend of our Father Provincial's.³⁷ He was looking very carefully for a house for us. He said that he had looked at some but that nothing appropriate could be found in the whole city and that it didn't seem possible to find any, as others were telling me. I then remembered the one I mentioned that we had disregarded. I thought, even though it's as bad as they say we can take care of our present need and later on sell it. I told Doctor Aguiar about it and asked him if he would do me the favor of looking at it.

34. To him, this didn't seem to be a bad plan. He had not seen the house, and even though it was a stormy and rough day, he wanted to go there at once. There was an occupant in it who had little interest in its being sold and did not want to show it to him, but its location and the little he could see pleased him greatly, and thus we decided to try to buy it. The gentleman who owned it was not here but the power to sell it had been given to a priest, a servant of God whom His Majesty inspired with a desire to sell it to us and deal with us very honestly.³⁸

35. It was arranged that I go to see it. It pleased me to such an extreme that if they had asked for twice as much as they did, it would have seemed cheap to me. I am not exaggerating, because two years before they were offering the owner that much, and he did not want to sell it. The next day a priest³⁹ and Doctor Aguiar went there, and when the latter learned of the amount of money that would be acceptable, he wanted to sign the contract at once. I had informed some of my friends, and they had

told me that if I gave this amount I was giving five hundred ducats too much. I told Doctor Aguiar, but he thought the price was cheap if I gave what was asked for. I was of the same mind. I myself would not have hesitated because it seemed to me like a gift, but since the money belonged to the order, I had some scruple. We met about this before Mass on the vigil of the feast of our glorious Father St. Joseph. I told them that after Mass we should meet again and come to a decision.

36. Doctor Aguiar is a very intelligent man and saw clearly that if our desire were made public we would either have to pay much more for the house or not buy it. Thus he was very careful and made the priest promise to come back there after Mass. We nuns went to recommend the matter to God, who said to me, "Do you hesitate over money?" letting me know that the house was suitable for us. The Sisters had prayed very much to St. Joseph that they might have a house by his feastday, and although there was no thought of having it so soon, he heard their prayers. Everyone urged me to conclude the contract. And thus it was done, for Doctor Aguiar found a notary at the door,⁴⁰ which seemed ordained by the Lord, and came with him and a witness and told me it was opportune to sign the contract. Having closed the door of the room so that nothing would be known (for this was Doctor Aguiar's fear), we concluded the sale, in accord with all the legal demands, on the vigil of the glorious St. Joseph,⁴¹ as I have said. It came about through the careful diligence and intelligence of this good friend.

37. No one thought the house would be sold for so little.⁴² Thus, as the news spread, the buyers began to appear and say that the priest who sold it gave it away practically and that the sale should be nullified because of the great fraud. The good priest suffered very much. They immediately informed the owners, a gentleman, as I said,⁴³ and his wife, both from the nobility. They were so happy that their house was being made into a monastery that they approved, although there was nothing else they could now do. Immediately, the next day, the deed was drawn up, and a third of the price was paid. Everything was done according to the requests of the priest. Although some things in the agreement were onerous to us, we accepted everything for his sake.

38. It may seem pointless that I spent so much time in telling about the buying of this house, but indeed those who considered the things in detail thought it was no less than a miracle, both in the price, which made the house seem like a gift, and in the fact that many from religious orders were so blinded that after looking at it did not want to buy it, as though it had never been in Burgos. Those who saw it were amazed and blamed the religious and called them fools. And a monastery of nuns (even two monasteries—one had been recently founded; the other had moved here from elsewhere after their former house had burned down) had looked at it a little while ago. So too did a wealthy person who is trying to found a monastery. They all let it go, and now they are very sorry.

39. Such was the outcry in the city that we saw clearly how right the good Doctor Aguiar was to keep the whole matter secret and in being so diligent about this. Indeed, we can say that, after God, it was he who gave us the house. Good intelligence is a great help in everything. And since he has so much, God moved him and brought this work to completion through him. For more than a month he helped and advised us on how to adapt the house well and with little cost. It seemed as though our Lord had kept it for Himself, for almost everything seemed to be already done. Indeed, as soon as I saw it and how everything was as though made to order for us and done so quickly, it seemed like a dream. By bringing us to such a paradise, our Lord repaid us generously for what we had suffered. Because of the garden, the view, and the water, the property is nothing else but that. May He be blessed forever, amen.

40. The archbishop learned of it immediately and rejoiced in our success, thinking that his obstinacy had been the reason, and he was very right. I wrote to him that I was happy he was pleased and that I would hurry to adapt the house so that he could give us his final permission. Once I told him this, I made haste to move in because I was told that they wanted to keep us where we were until the deed or I don't know what was signed. Thus we moved into one room even though an occupant was still living in the house,⁴⁴ for there was also some trouble in getting rid of him. They told me that the archbishop was very angry

about our moving in. I tried to appease him as much as I could, for, because he is good, even though he does get angry, he soon gets over it. He was also angry when he learned that we had the grates and the turn, for he thought that I wanted to go ahead at all costs. I wrote to him that this was not the case, but that in a house for persons living a life of recollection these are customary, that I hadn't even dared to put up a cross so as not to appear to be going ahead before having permission, and this was true. Notwithstanding all the good will I showed, there was no way of getting him to grant the license.

41. He came to see the house and was very pleased with it and showed us much kindness but did not give us the permission, although he offered more hope. There were still I don't know what contracts to be made with Catalina de Tolosa. Everyone was very afraid that he would not give it. But Doctor Manso, whom I mentioned,⁴⁵ as the other friend of Father Provincial's, was too good a friend of the archbishop's to be waiting for the proper time before reminding him and urging him. It was very distressing to Doctor Manso to see us going about as we were. For even though there was a chapel in this house, which was never used except for saying Mass for the owners, the archbishop never allowed Mass to be said for us in the house. On feastdays and Sundays we had to go out to a church in order to hear Mass.⁴⁶ Fortunately it was nearby, although between the time we moved and the time the foundation was made, a month more or less passed by. All the learned men said there was sufficient reason for allowing Mass in the chapel. The archbishop who is a very learned man understood this too. So it seems there is no other explanation than that our Lord wanted us to suffer. Although I bore it better, there was a nun who in seeing herself out on the street trembled from the distress she felt.

42. In drawing up the contracts there was no little trouble, because one minute they were satisfied with the guarantors, the next minute they wanted the money; and they made many other vexing demands. In this, the archbishop was not so much to blame but one administrator who was very hostile to us. If in God's providence it had not been necessary for this administrator to go on a trip and another take his place, it seems we would

never have obtained the license. Oh, what Catalina de Tolosa had to suffer in all this is impossible to say! She bore everything with a patience that amazed me, and she did not tire of providing for us. She gave all the furnishings we needed to set up the house, such as beds and many other things, for she had a well supplied house. It seemed that we were lacking no necessity, even if she lacked it in her own house. Other founding benefactors of our monasteries have given much more in property and wealth, but for none of them was the cost as much as one-tenth of what she went through. And if she had had no children, she would have given all that she could. She desired so much to see the work completed that everything she did toward this end seemed to her little.

43. Seeing so much delay, I wrote to the bishop of Palencia begging him to write again to the archbishop. The bishop was disgusted with him, for everything the archbishop did to us the bishop took as done to him. And what amazed us was that the archbishop never thought he was offensive to us in anything. I begged the bishop to write again to the archbishop saying that since we had the house and had done what he had wanted that he should bring the matter to a close. The bishop sent me an open letter for the archbishop written in such a way that if I had given it to him we would have ruined everything. Thus Doctor Manso, my confessor and adviser, did not want me to give it to him. Although it was very courteous, it spoke some truths that, given the temperament of the archbishop, were enough to annoy him, for he was already annoyed by some of the messages the bishop had sent to him, and they were close friends. The bishop used to tell me that just as through the death of our Lord enemies had become friends so through me friends had become enemies. I told him that from this he could see what I was. I had taken special care, in my opinion, so that they would not become angry with each other.

44. I begged the bishop again, with the best reasons I could think of, that he write another very friendly letter to the archbishop and remind him of the service the monastery would render to God. He did what I asked him, which was no trifle. But since he saw that writing the letter was for the service of God

and a favor to me, which he has always been ready to grant, he finally forced himself. He wrote to me afterward that of all the things he had done for the order nothing compared with his having had to write this letter. In short, this letter was so effective, together with the diligence of Doctor Manso, that the archbishop gave us the license.⁴⁷ He sent it with the good Hernando de Matanza, who arrived with no little joy. On this day the Sisters had been more distressed than ever, and the good Catalina de Tolosa so much so that she could not be consoled. It seems that the Lord at the time when He was about to give us the joy wanted to afflict us more. Even I, who had not been lacking in confidence, was lacking in it the night before. May His name be blessed without end and praised forever and ever, amen.

45. The archbishop gave Doctor Manso permission to say the first Mass the next day and to reserve the Blessed Sacrament. And the Father Prior of San Pablo, who belongs to the Dominican order (to which our order owes so much as well as to the Society of Jesus), said the high Mass with much solemnity provided by musicians who came unrequested with their wind instruments.

All our friends were very pleased and so too was almost the whole city, for they had felt very sorry to see us in such a situation. They were so critical of what the archbishop was doing that I sometimes felt more sorry at what I heard people were saying about him than I was about what we ourselves were going through. The joy of the good Catalina de Tolosa and of the Sisters was so great that it inspired me with devotion and I said to God: "Lord, what do these your servants seek other than to serve you and see themselves enclosed for You in a place they will never leave?"

46. No one but those who experience it will believe the joy that is felt in these foundations once we are enclosed where no secular person can enter, for however much we love them it is not enough to take away this great consolation in finding ourselves alone. It seems to me comparable to taking many fish from the river with a net; they cannot live until they are in the water again. So it is with souls accustomed to living in the running streams of their Spouse. When taken out of them and caught up in the net of worldly things, they do not truly live un-

til they find themselves back in those waters. This I always observe in each of these Sisters; this I know from my own experience. Nuns who see in themselves the desire to go out among seculars and converse with them a great deal should fear that they have not discovered the living water of which the Lord spoke to the Samaritan woman⁴⁸ and that their Spouse has hid it from them, and rightly so since they are not satisfied in being with Him. I am afraid that this latter stems from two causes: either they did not embrace the religious state for Him alone; or, after having embraced it, they do not recognize the great favor God has granted them in choosing them for Himself and freeing them from being subject to a man who is often the death of them and who could also be, God forbid, the death of their souls.

47. Oh, my Spouse, true God and true man! Should this favor be taken so lightly? Let us praise Him, my Sisters, because He has granted it to us and let us not tire of praising so great a King and Lord, who has prepared for us a kingdom without end in exchange for some little troubles which will end tomorrow and which come wrapped in a thousand joys. May He be blessed forever, amen, amen.

48. A few days after the house was founded, it seemed to Father Provincial⁴⁹ and me that in the endowment Catalina de Tolosa had provided for this house there were certain difficulties that could have given rise to a lawsuit and cause her some worry. And we wanted more to trust in God than to be the occasion for giving her any suffering. For this and some other reasons, with the permission of Father Provincial, we nullified in the presence of a notary the contracts concerning the money she had given us and returned all the documents. This was done in great secrecy so that the archbishop wouldn't know of it, for he would have been hurt. But doing this also hurt the house. When it is known that a monastery is founded in poverty, there is nothing to fear because everyone helps. But when people think it has an income, to be without one is dangerous and the monastery will be left temporarily without means. Catalina de Tolosa has provided for a remedy that will become possible after her death. She has arranged that her two daughters, who were to

make profession in our monastery of Palencia that year, would transfer to this house their inheritance that would have been promised to Palencia at their profession. And to another daughter, who desired to receive the habit here, she has left the family estate which amounts to as much as the income she wanted to provide.⁵⁰ The only drawback is that these goods cannot be used at once, but I have always held that we will not be in want. The Lord who provides that alms be given to our other monasteries founded in poverty will awaken some to give them here, or will provide the means by which nuns can support themselves. Since no monastery had been founded under such conditions, I sometimes begged the Lord that since He had desired that this foundation be made He ordain that it be helped and have what is necessary, and I had no desire to leave here until I saw whether someone wanting to be a nun would enter.

49. While I was thinking about this one day after Communion, the Lord said to me: "Why do you doubt? Everything is now finished; you are free to go." He thereby let me know that they would not lack what was necessary. These words so impressed me that I had no more worry than I would have if I had left the nuns with a very good income. I immediately began to plan my departure, for it seemed to me I was no longer doing anything else here than enjoy myself in this house, for it suited me perfectly, and I could have been a greater help, although with much more hardship, in other monasteries.

The archbishop and the bishop of Palencia remained good friends. Soon the archbishop began to show us much kindness and gave the habit to Catalina de Tolosa's daughter⁵¹ and to another nun who within a short time entered here. Up to the present, there are some persons who have been looking after us. Nor will our Lord allow his brides to suffer if they serve Him as they are obliged. May His Majesty give them the grace for this through His great mercy and goodness.

[*Epilogue*]

JHS

IT HAS OCCURRED TO ME to record here how the nuns of the first monastery that was founded, St. Joseph's in Avila, about which I wrote in another work and not in this book,¹ transferred their obedience to the order after having first professed it to the bishop.

2. When the monastery was founded, Don Alvaro de Mendoza was bishop, the one who is now bishop of Palencia. All the time that he was in Avila he was extremely helpful to the nuns. And with regard to our giving obedience to the bishop, I heard from our Lord that it would be expedient to give it to him.² This was borne out afterward, for in all the disagreements with the order and in many other things that happened we clearly found great support in him. Never did he allow any priest to make a visitation nor did he do anything more in that monastery than what I asked him. This arrangement lasted seventeen years, a little more or less, for I don't remember,³ nor did I ever intend that this jurisdiction be changed.

3. When those years were over, the bishop of Avila was transferred to the diocese of Palencia.⁴ At that time I was in the monastery of Toledo, and our Lord told me that it was fitting for the nuns of St. Joseph's to give their obedience to the order, that I should try to bring this about because in not doing this there would soon be a relaxation of observance in that house. Since I had heard in a former locution that it was good to give it to the bishop, it seemed the Lord was contradicting Himself.⁵ I didn't know what to do. I told my confessor who is now bishop of Osma and who is a very learned man.⁶ He told me there was no contra-

diction, that formerly the one way was necessary and that now another was and that he thought it would be better if the monastery in Avila were united with these others than alone; and that this was true has been clearly seen in many ways.

4. He made me go to Avila to discuss the matter. I found the bishop of a completely different opinion, for in no way would he agree to this. But since I told him some of the reasons for the harm that could come to the nuns, and he loved them very much and has very good intelligence, and God helped, he thought of some other weightier reasons than the ones I had given him and decided to allow the transfer of jurisdiction. Even though some priests told him that this was not a good thing to do, he did not change his mind.

5. It was necessary to submit the matter to the vote of the nuns. For some of them the change was a very painful one to make. But since they respected me, they accepted my reasons, especially when they realized that now that the bishop, to whom the order owed so much and whom I loved, was gone, they could no longer have me with them. This made a strong impression on them, and thus this important matter was concluded. All the friars and nuns have seen clearly how lost that house would have been in doing the contrary. Blessed be the Lord who so carefully looks after the affairs of His servants! May He be blessed forever, amen.

CONSTITUTIONS

INTRODUCTION

THE CONTRIBUTION of St. Teresa to spiritual literature has received universal recognition. As a mother foundress, she also stands out for her practicality and talent in having maintained the highest spiritual life amid everyday conflicts, conflicts that arose particularly from the material and personal needs of the nuns in her new communities. But one of her accomplishments revealing another facet of her talents and that might escape notice is her work as legislator for her new Carmels.

When Teresa petitioned Rome for the faculty to found the monastery of St. Joseph, she had only a general plan in mind. In the reply from Rome, February 7, 1562, the brief granted her the power to make licit and respectable statutes and ordinances in conformity with canon law. It also granted her the faculty to change these for the better or also abrogate them, entirely or in part, according to the condition of the times and to make other new ones.¹ Teresa needed these powers because the constitutions in use at her monastery of the Incarnation would not have served for the kind of life she envisioned in which the primitive rule of Carmel was to be observed. Neither did there exist within the order any other constitutions drafted for monasteries of nuns observing the primitive rule.

If one looks for an indication of the first steps taken toward the drawing up of constitutions, one may find them in Teresa's account of her first foundation presented in her *Life*. She writes: "Now although there is some austerity because meat is never eaten without necessity and there is an eight-month fast and other things, as are seen in the first rule, this is still in many respects considered small by the Sisters; and they have other observances which seemed to us necessary in order to observe the

rule with greater perfection.”² These words were written after some three years of experience with the new life at St. Joseph’s. The other observances referred to, and introduced so as to keep the rule with greater perfection, formed no doubt the nucleus of the constitutions. The first years, then, must have served partly as experimental ones. María de San José supports such a surmise when she points out that Teresa preferred first to experiment before presenting anything to visitators and superiors for approval as law.³ Another of the early nuns, María de San Jerónimo, testified that if any religious introduced some practices of penance or mortification, Teresa wanted to be the first one to try them out.⁴ Finally, by the time the Mother Foundress wrote her first draft of the *Way of Perfection*, in 1566, the year after she had completed her *Life*, she was able to refer explicitly to the constitutions,⁵ which leads to the conclusion that by that time at least some constitutions existed in written form.

When, in 1567, the prior general Rubeo visited Avila, Teresa was able to show him the text of her constitutions and seek his approbation of them. The provincial of the Carmelites in Castile, Angel de Salazar, has left us explicit testimony that Rubeo did see and approve Teresa’s constitutions.⁶ This approval came as the culmination, in a way, of those most quiet and restful years of Teresa’s life,⁷ the first five years at St. Joseph’s.

The text shown to Rubeo unfortunately has not come down to us. The Teresian constitutions that have been preserved legislate not merely for the single monastery in Avila but for a number of Carmels. Some idea, however, of the first text can be got from the constitutions for the friars that were followed in Duruelo. These constitutions were obviously copied, with certain adaptations, from Teresa’s first constitutions. This can be deduced from the brevity of the text and from the occasional lapses in which the redactor failed to change the gender from feminine to masculine. These constitutions for the friars were sent to the prior general for his approval and consequently have been preserved in the general archives of the Carmelites of the Observance in Rome. The text is simple and sparse, indicating that she who when speaking of prayer was often extravagant with words was frugal with them when writing laws.

As for Teresa's constitutions for her nuns, the oldest text that is preserved is an expansion of the first constitutions and speaks of Carmels in the plural and of lay Sisters, who were not envisioned at the beginning. It represents a stage in an evolving process. The autograph of this text, which had been conserved in the general archives of the Spanish congregation of disclaled Carmelites in Madrid, was lost in the last century at the time of the exclausturation. It bore the title: *Constitutions for the Sisters of the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel of the First Rule Without Relaxation, Given by the Most Reverend General of the said Order Fray Juan Bautista Rubeo*. Fortunately a copy of this lost autograph had been made for the general archives of the Portuguese congregation.

Another copy of these early constitutions is preserved in the monastery of nuns of the primitive rule of Carmel founded by María de Jesús in Alcalá.⁸ A third copy comes from one of the first historians of the order, Jerónimo de San José. From various ancient copies of these constitutions, Padre Jerónimo constructed his own text which he published in his *Historia del Carmen Descalzo* in 1635.

Editors of Teresa's works have made different choices with respect to these copies. Vicente de la Fuente chose the copy that is in Alcalá for his edition of the works of St. Teresa published in 1861.⁹ Padre Silverio chose for his critical edition of 1919 the copy that was made from the autograph for the Portuguese Carmelites. Padre Efrén opted for the copy published by Padre Jerónimo.¹⁰ The variant readings in these texts may represent different moments in the evolving process as well as, in the case of Jerónimo, some meddling.

When compared with what one can estimate concerning the first text for St. Joseph's alone, this later text shows an increase in length of little over a half. But the increase is due mainly to the long penal code that was added to the text and of which Teresa was certainly not the author. This code, with its boring, interminable categories of faults and penalties, makes up one half of the text of these later constitutions. A comparison of this penal code with the one contained in the constitutions of the Incarnation published by Silverio leaves no doubt that the code in

Teresa's constitutions was taken from some version of already existing Carmelite constitutions. But whether, in fact, the constitutions published by Silverio are those of the Incarnation at Avila or of some other Carmelite monastery of nuns with the same name is uncertain. The entire section, then, on faults and penalties (nos. 43-56) represents neither Teresa's mentality nor her style; she simply accepted it without attempting to write a penal code of her own. We have placed this code in the notes so as not to detract in any way from what flows directly from the Foundress's pen.

The Teresian constitutions, then, contain two major sections: the first deals with the daily schedule and way of life of the new family; the second, with the penal discipline required in religious codes of the time. These two sections are followed by a brief epilogue after which come two more prescriptions which are out of place and were probably drafted at a later date.

The first part, written by Teresa, is simple and balanced. With no intention of inserting her spiritual message into her laws, she merely drew up some general guidelines for the community life. The spiritual commentary on her constitutions must be sought principally in the *Way of Perfection* if one is to avoid the temptation to judge by the letter alone.

What stands out in these guidelines for the Teresian life is balance. We find an interweaving of eremitism and cenobitism, of work and contemplation, of liturgical and extra-liturgical prayer. Even the apostolic life is integrated into the contemplative life, in conversations (no. 18), in prayers, and penances (no. 58). The practice of asceticism and enclosure are tempered by a family spirit and by gardens and pleasant views. In receiving and educating novices stress must be placed on prayer and virtues, only persons of prayer should be admitted to the postulancy.

In tracing out her program of contemplative life, Teresa without doubt took into consideration the primitive Carmelite rule as well as the Carmelite constitutions and ordinal then in force, but she did so independently, refusing to tone down the new spirit that issued from her own extraordinary life of prayer. In fact she reacts against a whole gamut of practices observed in

her former monastery. Even with regard to prescriptions of the Carmelite rule, she allows herself a certain freedom, as with the law seemingly as important as that of the great silence, which she reforms so as to make room for evening recreation. "Almost everything," she qualifies, "is set up in conformity with our rule" (no. 31), thereby intimating her own conscious role as legislator.

The legislator herself was the prioress, and thus understandably "the Mother Prioress should be the first on the list for sweeping" (no. 22). As for her own method of governing and the spirit in which she wrote her laws: "these things should be done with a mother's love" (no. 34).

As Teresa went on founding her new Carmels, she met with situations in which she had to make exceptions to rules. Because the town of Malagón, for example, was too small for the nuns to live on alms, the monastery had to be endowed with a fixed income rather than founded in poverty as required in Teresa's own constitutions. Nor was fish available in that area, a situation calling for dispensation from the abstinence prescribed by the primitive rule. And in Seville, the unbearable heat demanded some changes in the kind of material prescribed for clothing.

As Carmels multiplied, copies of the constitutions multiplied, and as these multiplied fidelity to the original text diminished. There were prioresses who found no problem at all in adding and omitting whatever seemed suitable to them.¹¹ There were also new historical circumstances offering the occasion for additions to the legislation. The appointment in 1569 of apostolic visitators for the Carmelite order soon had repercussions in a series of decrees affecting Teresa's Carmels as well. Teresa refers to these as "the Acts."¹² Not all of these decrees are known. Nor did they always please Teresa, as she indicates in a letter to Gracián: "If it seems all right to you, remove the ruling of Padre Fernández where he says that they should not eat eggs or have bread at collation, for I was never able to keep him from imposing this rule. It is sufficient to fulfill the obligation set by the Church without imposing another on top of it, for the nuns tend to get scrupulous, and this does them harm; some don't think they have a need when they in fact do."¹³

When in September of 1576 Padre Juan Roca was named

monitor for the friars at their chapter in Almodóvar, which meant that he had the task of promoting the spiritual life in each house, Teresa learned that he was monitoring the houses of her nuns as well. She reacted strongly in a letter to Gracián: "This is what my nuns fear: that overbearing superiors will come along who will crush them. . . . It is a strange thing that visitors do not think they have accomplished their task unless they make regulations." And as for Padre Roca's regulations: "Just reading them tired me out; what would I do if I had to follow them?"¹⁴

On the whole, it must be admitted, the apostolic visitors respected Teresa's views and consulted with her, issuing no new orders without her prior knowledge. This was true as well with respect to regulations made by Gracián.

In addition to the "Acts" of the visitors, one had to consider what came from the Holy See. The Church was in a state of reform after the Council of Trent, and the religious orders had to incorporate the new laws that had been drawn up, one example being the new prescriptions regarding cloister.

All this additional legislation, arising from different sources, at times dealing with a point already provided for, resulted in some obscurity and ambiguity when the time came for a practical application. No one is surprised, then, if Teresa desired a clearer presentation of all this legislation. Her chance came with the brief *Pia consideratione*, June 22, 1580, which gave the provincial to be elected in a coming chapter, at which the discalced Carmelites would separate into their own province, the faculty to legislate for the discalced nuns. The letters that Teresa writes to Gracián before this chapter, especially those of February 21 and 27, 1581, clearly show her concern about the new constitutions and the coming chapter. Without any methodical order, she makes a number of recommendations, apparently as they enter her mind. What she wanted was one body of law incorporating the Acts of the apostolic visitors into her constitutions, and in addition some other changes she felt necessary.

With Gracián's approval, the Mother Foundress also sought suggestions from her Carmels concerning changes to be made in

the constitutions. She intended to send these on to Gracián, but not without first reviewing and revising them herself. As a matter of fact, the only suggestions that seem to have pleased her were those sent by Isabel de Santo Domingo, the prioress in Segovia.¹⁵ As for the memorandum sent by Avila, she was shocked to see what a state the house had got itself into.¹⁶

The constitutions that resulted and were issued by the chapter are nowadays referred to as the Constitutions of Alcalá, after the city where the chapter was held. They were completed in March of 1581. In the prologue of these new constitutions, Gracián wrote: "Because the laws and the constitutions you have had until now are so holy and religious, drawn up and ordained by such great men having so much authority, those we now give are no different but the same you have had until now, with some few additions, omissions, or changes which seemed suitable for the good of the religious life."¹⁷

In a letter about these constitutions Gracián lists the founts of this new body of laws: the constitutions of Rubeo and the acts of the visitators, Pedro Fernández and Gracián himself. Rubeo's constitutions were in fact Teresa's approved by Rubeo, but no mention is made of Teresa as the author of the main source of these constitutions of Alcalá. Why? Seemingly it was not feasible in the mind of these men to include a woman among the legislators; with Rubeo's name alone the laws would carry more weight.

The first constitutions drafted for St. Joseph's in Avila would have amounted to about thirteen pages, the later ones came to twenty-nine pages, and those of Alcalá filled forty-nine pages. From a literary point of view, the constitutions of Alcalá, put together from different sources, although Teresa's constitutions were the main fount, are a hybrid.¹⁸ Since they were not drafted by Teresa, editors usually do not include them among her complete works. If they are omitted here, it is with the understanding that the text of the earlier constitutions does not represent Teresa's final word. As for how well the constitutions of Alcalá represent the mind and wishes of Teresa, scholars are not in agreement.¹⁹

What made the Mother Foundress happy to receive the Alcalá constitutions was that she finally had an established and

fully approved text with the signatures she most desired: the pope's representative to the chapter, the apostolic commissary, Juan de las Cuevas, O.P.; the first provincial of the Teresian Carmel, Jerónimo Gracián; his vicar Nicolás Doria; and the provincial counsellors, Antonio de Jesús, St. John of the Cross, Gabriel de la Asunción, and Ambrosio Mariano de San Benito. Teresa's only urgings now were that these constitutions be printed promptly so that there could be no further problem with interpolations. Her pleas were promptly heeded, for the first printed edition, in pocket size, appeared that same year, 1581, in Salamanca.

The constitutions of Alcalá remained in force for no more than a decade. When the first supply of copies was exhausted because of the increasing number of Carmels, Ana de Jesús took the initiative in 1588 to have them reprinted in Madrid. Two years later they were approved by Sixtus V and published in Rome in Latin with some slight retouches. But in 1592, Nicolás Doria, as vicar general of the Spanish congregation of discalced Carmelites, denied that these constitutions of Alcalá were Teresa's constitutions and changed them substantially, receiving approval of his own version from Gregory XIV. The constitutions of Alcalá were never again used as law in the order, though they did continue to remain in use in some autonomous sectors of Carmel. Ana de Jesús had brought them to France, and they continued to be published in French translations.

Not until the second half of the last century were Teresa's earlier constitutions given their place in the editions of her complete works. Don Vicente de la Fuente discovered the copy of these earlier constitutions that was conserved in the Carmel founded by María de Jesús, and he published this text in his edition of Teresa's writings.²⁰

Our translation is of this earlier text of Teresa's constitutions but follows the copy chosen by Padre Silverio, that is, the one made for the Portuguese congregation from the autograph now missing. This text is used as well by both Tomás Alvarez and Fortunato Antolín in their critical editions.

K. K.

THE CONSTITUTIONS

On the Order to Be Observed in Spiritual Matters

1. Matins are to be said after nine, not before, but not so long after nine that the nuns would be unable, when finished, to remain for a quarter of an hour examining their consciences as to how they have spent the day. The bell should be rung for this examen, and the one designated by the Mother prioress should read a short passage from some book in the vernacular on the mystery that will serve as the subject for reflection the following day. The time spent in these exercises should be so arranged that at eleven o'clock the bell may be rung to signal the hour for retirement and sleep. The nuns should spend this time of examen and prayer together in the choir. Once the Office has begun, no Sister should leave the choir without permission.

2. In the summer they should arise at five and remain in prayer until six. In the winter¹ they should rise at six and remain in prayer until seven. Immediately after prayer, they will say the Hours up to None, unless the day is a solemn feast or the feast of a saint to which the nuns have a special devotion. They will in that case postpone None so as to sing it before the Mass. On Sundays and feast days, Mass, Vespers, and Matins are to be sung. On the first days after Easter² and on other solemn days they may sing Lauds, especially on the feast of the glorious St. Joseph.

3. The chant should never be sung with musical notation³ but should be done in a monotone and with uniform voices. Ordinarily, everything should be recited, and also the Mass, for the Lord will be served if some time remains so that the Sisters may earn their livelihood.

4. The Sisters should try not to miss choir for any light reason. When the Hours are finished, they should go about their duties. Mass will be said at eight o'clock in the summer and at nine in the winter. Those who receive Communion should remain a short while in choir.

The Days for Receiving the Lord

5. Communion will be received every Sunday, on feast days, and on days honoring our Lord, our Lady, our Father St. Albert, and St. Joseph, and on other days that the confessor designates in accordance with the devotion and spirit of the Sisters and with the permission of the Mother prioress. Communion will also be received on the titular feast of the house.

6. Shortly before meals, the bell will be rung for the examen of conscience as to what has been done up to that time. Each one should propose to correct the greatest fault she sees in herself and recite an Our Father that God might give her the grace to do so. Each Sister should kneel down wherever she is and make her examen briefly. At two o'clock Vespers should be said, except during Lent when it will be said at eleven.⁴ During the times when Vespers is said at two, it should be followed by an hour of reading⁵ (during Lent the hour of reading takes place at two o'clock); this means that at two o'clock the bell is rung for Vespers. On the vigil of feast days, this hour of reading will take place after Compline.

7. In summer, Compline is to be said at six o'clock; in the winter, at five. In both winter and summer the bell is rung for silence at eight o'clock, and the silence is kept until after Prime of the following day. This silence should be observed with great care. During the other times, no Sister may speak with another without permission, except about necessary matters if she has duties to fulfill.⁶ The Mother prioress may give permission should one Sister desire to speak with another so as to quicken the love each has for her Spouse or to be consoled in a time of some need or temptation. This rule of silence should not be understood to refer to a question and answer or to a few words, for such things can be spoken without permission. An hour before they say Matins, let the bell be rung for prayer. This hour of prayer may be spent in reading if they are drawn in spirit to spend the hour after Vespers in prayer. They may decide in accordance with what helps them most toward recollection.

8. The prioress should see to it that good books are available, especially *The Life of Christ* by the Carthusian, the *Flos Sanctorum*, *The Imitation of Christ*, *The Oratory of Religious*, and those books written by Fray Luis de Granada and by Father Fray Pedro de Alcantara.⁷ This sustenance for the soul is in some way as necessary as is food for the body. All of that time not taken up with community life and duties should be spent by each Sister in the cell or hermitage designated by the prioress; in sum, in a place where she can be recollected and, on those days that are not feast days, occupied in doing some work. By withdrawing into solitude in this way, we fulfill what the rule commands: that each one should be alone.⁸ No Sister, under pain of a grave fault, may enter the cell of another without the prioress's permission. Let there never be a common workroom.⁹

On Temporal Matters

9. Let them live always on alms and without any income,¹⁰ but insofar as possible let there be no begging. Great must be the need that makes them resort to begging. Rather, they should help themselves with the work of their hands, as St. Paul did;¹¹ the Lord will provide what they need. Provided they want no more than this and are content to live simply, they will have what is necessary to sustain life. If they strive with all their might to please the Lord, His Majesty will keep them from want. Their earnings must not come from work requiring careful attention to fine details but from spinning and sewing or other unrefined labor that does not so occupy the mind as to keep it from the Lord. Nor should they do work with gold or silver. Neither should there be any haggling over what is offered for their work. They should graciously accept what is given. If they see that the amount offered is insufficient, they should not take on the work.

10. In no way should the Sisters have any particular possessions, nor should such permission be granted; nothing in the line of food or clothing; nor should they have any coffer or small chest, or box, or cupboard, unless someone have an office in the

community. But everything must be held in common. This is very important because through small things the devil can bring about a relaxation of the perfection in which poverty is observed. For this reason the prioress should be very careful. If she sees that a Sister is attached to something, be it a book, or a cell, or anything else, she should take it from her.

On Fasting

11. A fast is observed from the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, which is in September, until Easter, with the exception of Sundays. Meat must never be eaten unless out of necessity as the rule prescribes.¹²

12. The habit should be made of coarse cloth or black, rough wool, and only as much wool as is necessary should be used. The sleeves should be narrow, no wider at the opening than at the shoulder. Circular, without pleats, and no larger in the back than in the front, the habit should extend in length to the feet. The scapular should be made of the same material and four fingers shorter in length than the habit. The choir mantle should be white, of the same coarse cloth, and equal in length to the scapular. They should use as little cloth for this as possible, attending always to the necessary rather than to the superfluous. Let them always wear the scapular over the toque. The toques should be made of fine tow and without pleats; the inner tunics of fine wool, and the sheets of the same. Let sandals made from hemp be worn and, for the sake of modesty, stockings of rough wool or of cloth made from rough tow. The pillowcases may be of fine tow or, when necessary, of linen.

13. Straw-filled sacks will be used for mattresses, for it has been shown that these can be tolerated even by persons with weak health. No hangings should be used except, in cases of necessity, hemp mattings or, to cover a doorway, a blanket or some rough, woollen cloth or something similar that is poor. Each nun should have her own bed. Let there be no carpeting or cushions, except in the church. These are all matters of proper

religious observance. They are mentioned here because with relaxation there comes sometimes a forgetfulness of what pertains to religious life and its obligations. Colored clothing or bedding must never be used, not even something as small as a ribbon. Sheepskins should never be worn. If someone is sick, she may wear an extra garment made of the same rough wool as the habit.

14. The Sisters must keep their hair cut so as not to have to waste time in combing it. Never should a mirror be used or any adornments; there should be complete self-forgetfulness.

On the Enclosure

15. No nun should be seen with her face unveiled¹³ unless she is with her father, mother, brothers, or sisters, or has some reason which would make it seem as appropriate as in the cases mentioned. And her dealings should be with persons who are an edification and help for the life of prayer and who provide spiritual consolation rather than recreation. Another nun should always be present unless one is dealing with conscience matters. The prioress must keep the key to both the parlor and the main entrance. When the doctor, barber surgeon, confessor, or other necessary persons enter the enclosure, they should always be accompanied by two nuns. When some sick nun goes to confession, another nun must always be standing there at a distance so that she sees the confessor. She should not speak to him, unless a word or two, but only the sick nun may do so.

16. In houses that have a choir, within the enclosure, where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, and have chaplains or help for taking care of the church, there should be no door leading into the church.¹⁴ Where this help is not present, and the nuns cannot dispense from having a door, the prioress should keep the key. The door should be opened only when necessary and by two Sisters. When there is help for taking care of the church, the entrance should be closed up if there had been a door there.

17. The novices should be allowed visitors just as are the professed. For if they are in any way unhappy, this should make it

clear that they are expected to remain only if they are very willing to do so.¹⁵ And they should be given the opportunity to say so if they do not want to remain.

18. The Sisters should pay no attention to the affairs of the world, nor should they speak about them. They may do so if the matter concerns something for which they can offer a remedy or help those with whom they are speaking, assist them in finding the truth, or console them in some trial. If no effort is being made to make the conversation a fruitful one, they should bring it to a quick conclusion, as was said. It is very important that those who visit us leave with some benefit, and not after having wasted time, and that we benefit too. The companion should watch carefully whether this rule is observed. She is obliged to inform the prioress if it is not. When she does not do this, she incurs the same penalty as the one who breaks the rule. The punishment is that after having been warned twice by her companion, a nun on the third occasion should be given nine days in the prison cell and, on the third day of the nine, a discipline in the refectory. For the above rule is very important to the religious life.

19. As much as they can, the Sisters should avoid a great deal of conversation with relatives. Aside from the fact that they will become preoccupied with their relatives' affairs, they will find it difficult to avoid talking to them about worldly things.

20. Let them be very careful in speaking with outsiders, even though these may be close relatives. If these persons are not the kind who find their satisfaction in speaking about the things of God, they should be seen seldom, and the visit kept short.

On Accepting Novices

21. Let the nuns consider carefully whether those about to be received are persons of prayer desiring full perfection and contempt for the world. These aspirants should be at least seventeen. And if they are not detached from the world, they will find the way we live here hard to bear. It is better to consider these

things beforehand than to have to turn these persons away afterward. Aspirants should be healthy, intelligent, and able to recite the Divine Office and assist in choir. Profession should not be allowed if during the year of novitiate the novice does not show that she has the temperament and other qualities necessary for the kind of life she would have to live here. If some of these qualities are lacking, she should not be accepted, unless she is a person so taken with the service of the Lord and useful to the house that the deficiencies would give no cause whatsoever for disquiet and our Lord would be served by our consenting to her holy desires. If these latter are not great, for great desires will be the sign that God is calling her to this state, she should by no means be received. An applicant with whom the nuns are pleased should not be turned away because she has no alms to give the house; and this has always been the procedure. Should she desire to give an alms to the house, and holds it for that reason, she should not be refused profession if afterward she does not for some reason give it, nor should the nuns try to get the money through litigation. Let them be careful so as not to be motivated by self-interest. Little by little greed could so enter that they would look more to the alms than to the goodness and quality of the person. This should in no way be done, for doing so would be a great evil. They must ever keep in mind their profession of poverty that they might always in everything give off its fragrance. Let them reflect that it is not money that will sustain them but faith, perfection, and trust in God alone. This law should be considered carefully and be observed; it is appropriate and should be read to the Sisters. When someone is accepted, it should always be done in accordance with the majority opinion of the community, and the same holds for profession. Candidates being considered for admission as lay Sisters should be robust and be persons who show that they want to serve the Lord. They should spend a year before receiving the habit so that it may be seen whether they are fit for the demands of such a life, and so that they themselves may see whether they can bear up with it. They should not cover their faces with a veil, nor should they wear a black one. They may make profession two years after receiving the habit, unless through their great

virtue they merit making profession sooner. They should be treated with complete sisterly charity, and food and clothing should be provided for them just as they are for all.

On the Humble Offices

22. The Mother prioress should be the first on the list for sweeping so that she might give good example to all. She should pay careful attention to whether those in charge of the clothes and the food provide charitably for the Sisters in what is needed for subsistence and in everything else. Those having these offices should do no more for the prioress and the older nuns than they do for all the rest, as the rule prescribes,¹⁶ but be attentive to needs and age, and more so to needs, for sometimes those who are older have fewer needs. Since this is a general rule, it merits careful consideration, for it applies in many things. Let no Sister comment on whether the food given to eat is much or little, well or poorly seasoned. Let the prioress and the provider take care so that what is given (depending on what the Lord has given) is well prepared and the nuns will be able to get along with it, for they have nothing else. The Sisters should be obliged to tell the Mother prioress of their needs, and the novices to tell the novice mistress; this with regard to both clothing and food. And if they need something more than the usual things, they should, even though this may not be great, commend the matter to our Lord first. Our human nature often asks for more than what it needs, and sometimes the devil helps so as to cause fear about the practice of penance and fasting.

On the Sick

23. The sick should be cared for with fullness of love, concern for their comfort, and compassion in accordance with the poverty we practice. And they should praise God, our Lord, when they are well provided for. If they lack the things the wealthy possess for bringing relief in their illnesses, let them not

become sad. In joining us one must be very resolved about such matters. This is what it means to be poor: to be in want, perhaps, at times of greater need. The Mother prioress should be very careful that the healthy nuns be deprived of something necessary rather than have the sick ones go without some deeds of kindness. The sick ought to be visited and comforted by the Sisters. Let an infirmarian be appointed who has the ability and charity for this office. The sick nuns should strive, then, to show the perfection they acquired when healthy, being patient and as little a bother as possible if the illness is not serious. They should be obedient to the infirmarian, for her benefit and for the edification of the Sisters, that they themselves might gain through their illness. They should have linens and good beds (I mean, with mattresses) and should be treated with much charity and cleanliness.

24. Work with a time limit should never be given to the Sisters. Each one should strive to work so that the others might have food to eat. They should take into careful account what the rule ordains (that whoever wants to eat must work) and what St. Paul did.¹⁷ If someone should volunteer to take on a fixed daily amount of work, she may do so but ought not be given a penance if she fails to finish it.

25. Each day after supper, or collation, when the Sisters are gathered together, the turnkeeper should announce what was given that day in alms, naming the donors so that all may take care to pray that God will repay them.

26. The time for dinner cannot be fixed since this depends on how the Lord gives. When possible, during the winter, on Church fast days, the bell for dinner should be rung at eleven-thirty and on fast days of the order, at eleven; during the summer, at ten. Should the Lord give a Sister the desire to perform a mortification, she should ask permission. This good, devotional practice should not be lost, for some benefits are drawn from it. Let it be done quickly so as not to interfere with the reading. Outside the time of dinner and supper, no Sister should eat or drink without permission. When they are through with the meal, the Mother prioress may dispense from the silence so that all

may converse together on whatever topic pleases them most as long as it is not one that is inappropriate for a good religious. And they should all have their distaffs with them there.

27. Games should in no way be permitted, for the Lord will give to one the grace to entertain the others. In this way, the time will be well spent. They should strive not to be offensive to one another, but their words and jests must be discreet. When this hour of being together is over, they may in summer sleep for an hour; and whoever might not wish to sleep should observe silence.

28. After Compline and prayer, as was mentioned above,¹⁸ in both winter and summer, the Mother may allow the Sisters to talk together, each one having her work, as was mentioned. The amount of time should be determined by the Mother prioress. Let no Sister embrace another or touch her on the face or hands. The Sisters should not have particular friendships but should include all in their love for one another, as Christ often commanded His disciples.¹⁹ Since they are so few, this will be easy to do. They should strive to imitate their Spouse who gave His life for us. This love for one another that includes all and singles out no one in particular is very important.

29. No nun should reprove another for the faults she sees her commit. If they are serious, she should admonish her privately in a charitable way. And if the nun after being told three times does not amend, the Mother prioress should be told but no other Sister. Since there are Sisters appointed as monitors to attend to the faults, the rest of the Sisters need not bother and may pass over those seen in others and pay attention to their own. Nor should they meddle with faults committed in the fulfilment of offices, unless it's a serious matter which they are obliged to make known, as was mentioned. They should be very careful not to excuse themselves unless in matters where it is necessary to do so, for they will find much benefit in this practice.

30. The monitors should take great care to notice the faults and, when ordered by the prioress, should at times reprimand the Sisters in public, even though this may mean that a younger

Sister is reprimanding an older one. One is thereby exercised in humility. Thus the Sisters should not answer back even if they are without fault. No Sister may give or receive or ask for anything, even from her parents, without permission from the prioress. Everything that is offered as alms, should be shown to the prioress. Never should the prioress or any of the Sisters use the title *Doña*.²⁰

31. The punishment for the faults and failings committed in matters that were mentioned should be those penalties designated at the end of these constitutions, according to the seriousness of the fault, since almost everything is set up in conformity with our rule. In all of the above, the Mother prioress may with discretion and charity dispense in accordance with what may be just, and its observance does not oblige under pain of sin but of corporal punishment.

32. The house, with the exception of the church, should never be adorned, nor should there be anything finely wrought, but the wood should be rough. Let the house be small and the rooms humble: something that fulfills rather than exceeds the need. It should be as strong as possible. The wall should be high, and there should be a field where hermitages can be constructed so that the Sisters may be able to withdraw for prayer as our holy Fathers did.²¹

On the Deceased

33. The sacraments should be administered as ordained in the ordinal.²² The funeral and burial of a deceased nun should include a vigil and sung Mass; and also on the first anniversary, an office of the dead and a sung Mass. If it is possible the Gregorian Masses should be said for them; and if not, whatever is possible. The whole community should recite an Office of the dead for the nuns of their own monastery; and for other nuns (those of the primitive rule), an Office of the dead should be recited and, if possible, a Mass sung. For nuns of the mitigated observance, an Office of the dead should be recited.

On the Obligations of Each Office

34. It is the duty of the Mother prioress to take great care in everything about the observance of the rule and constitutions, to look after the integrity and enclosure of the house, to observe how the offices are carried out, and to see that both spiritual and temporal needs are provided for; and these things should be done with a mother's love. She should strive to be loved so that she may be obeyed. The prioress should appoint as portress and sacristan persons whom she can trust. So as not to allow for any attachment to an office, she may remove them as she sees fit. She should appoint nuns to all the other offices as well with the exception of those of subprioress and key-bearer which are elected offices. At least two of the key-bearers should know how to write and keep accounts.

35. It is the duty of the Mother subprioress to take care of the choir so that the recitation and chanting be done well, and the pause observed. This should be looked after carefully. When the prioress is absent, the subprioress should preside, be always present in the community, and correct the faults that are committed in the choir and refectory.

36. The key-bearers should receive a monthly report from the treasurer with the prioress present; the prioress should seek the opinion of the key-bearers in serious matters and have a chest, to which there should be three keys, for the community documents and funds. The prioress must have one key, and the oldest key-bearers the other two.

37. It is the duty of the sacristan to take care of all the things pertaining to the church and to see to it that the Lord is served there with much reverence and cleanliness. She should arrange that the hearing of confessions proceed in good order and, under pain of grave fault, she must not allow anyone to approach the confessional without permission unless to confess to an appointed confessor.

38. The duty of the treasurer and elder portress (offices that should be held by the same person) is to take care of providing in due time, if the Lord gives the means, for all that must be

bought for the house. This Sister must speak at the turn with a subdued voice and in an edifying way. She must look after the needs of the Sisters with charity and keep accounts of income and expenses. When she buys something she should not engage in haggling and bargaining over the price, but after discussing the cost twice she should either take the item or leave it. She shouldn't allow any Sister to come to the turn without permission. If a Sister must go to the grate to speak with someone, another Sister should be called to accompany her. The portress should tell no one about what comes to pass at the turn except the prioress, nor should she give anyone a letter without first giving it to the prioress to read. Neither should she, under pain of grave fault, give a message to any Sister or pass one along to someone outside without first giving it to the prioress.

39. The monitors should take great care to notice faults, for this is an important office, and they should tell the prioress about them, as was mentioned.²³

40. The novice mistress should be very prudent, prayerful, and spiritual. She should take great care to read the constitutions to the novices and teach them all that they have to do with regard to ceremonies and mortification. She should stress the interior life more than exterior things, taking daily account of how the novices are progressing in prayer, how they get along with the mystery on which they must meditate, and of the benefit they are deriving from it. She should teach them how to proceed with this practice and how in times of dryness to break their own will even in small things. Let the one who has this office be careful lest she grow careless in anything, for it is a matter of educating souls so that the Lord might dwell in them. Let her treat them compassionately and lovingly, not being surprised by their faults, for they must advance little by little, and mortify each one according to what her spirit can suffer. She should lay more stress on doing away with the lack of virtue than on rigorous penance. The prioress should send someone to help her teach them to read.

41. All the Sisters should give the prioress a monthly account of how they have done in prayer, of how the Lord is leading

them, for His Majesty will give her light so that if they are not proceeding well she might guide them. Doing this requires humility and mortification and is very beneficial. Should the prioress find that she has no one competent for the office of novice mistress, she should herself take on the office and regard this work as something most important and appoint someone to help her.

42. When those who have an office must spend the hour designated for prayer at their task, they should take another hour for prayer in which they are the most likely to be free. This should be understood to apply when they are not able to give themselves to prayer for the whole, or greater part, of the hour.²⁴

57. In each monastery a copy of these constitutions should be kept in the chest of three keys, and there should be other copies so that they may be read once a week to all the Sisters gathered in community at a time fixed by the Mother prioress. Each Sister should keep them very much in mind, for this is what they must do in order, with the help of the Lord, to advance far. They should read them at times, and thus there should be more copies in the monastery than those mentioned so that each one, if she desires, may take a copy to her cell.

58. Alms in the form of money that the Lord might give should always be placed at once in the chest of three keys save when it amounts to less than nine or ten ducats. In this latter case it should be given to the key-bearer designated by the prioress, and she in turn will give the procuratrix what the prioress has told the latter to spend. Each night before the bell is rung for silence, the procuratrix should give a detailed account to either the prioress or the key-bearer. And when the accounting is made, they should together record it in the monastery book so as to render a yearly account to the visitor.

Deo Gratias

59. The ordinal prescribes some of the disciplines that are to be taken when the ferial Office is recited; the discipline is taken

on ferial days in Advent and Lent; outside these times, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays when the ferial Office is recited. In addition, it should be taken every Friday of the year for the increase of the faith, for benefactors, for souls in purgatory, for captives, and for those in mortal sin. A *Miserere* and prayers for the Church and for those intentions mentioned should be recited. Each one should take these disciplines herself in the choir after Matins. The others are given with twigs as the ordinal prescribes.²⁵ No one should take any more disciplines without permission, nor do anything penitential without it.

ON MAKING THE VISITATION

INTRODUCTION

AS WITH THE GREATER PART of the Teresian writings, this work represents a response to an obedience and reveals the customary repugnance toward beginning the work. But when finished, Teresa thought the result of her effort would prove beneficial (no. 54), a conclusion that was not unusual for her.

Although nothing is expressly stated concerning the identity of the one who gave her the orders to write this treatise, there is no lack of evidence to the fact that it was Gracián. The visitorator for whom she was writing (no. 54) was in fact the one who had ordered her to write her *Foundations*, and this latter was by Teresa's own admission, Gracián (*Foundations*, ch. 27, no. 22).

It is not known with any certitude when Gracián gave Teresa the orders to put her thoughts on paper with regard to a visitation. All we can state definitely is that the work was finished before she began the final part of the *Foundations*. But this "final part of the Foundations" need not refer to the last foundations, which Teresa began in 1581. It refers most probably to those foundations described in chapters 20-27 of that work. After the foundation in Caravaca in 1576, Teresa figured that her task was finished since the prior general had begun to oppose any new Teresian Carmels. What seems certain, then, is that this little treatise would have been written in Toledo during the summer of 1576, since on October 5, 1576, she wrote to Gracián stating that she was going to begin writing about the other foundations.

In the first edition of St. Teresa's works, published in 1588 by Fray Luis de León, this present writing, as was true also of the

Foundations, was omitted. After Luis de León's death, the autograph of this treatise remained in the possession of Dr. Francisco Sobrino, who was a professor at the university of Valladolid. When Philip II sought the manuscripts of Teresa for his library at the Escorial, this autograph was sent there, where it still remains.

Not until 1613 was it published for the first time, and this in compliance with the wishes of the general of the order, Alonso de Jesús María. The printed edition also included a pastoral letter by Padre Alonso. No mention was made of Gracián, who was still alive, and some passages referring to him were retouched; the epilogue (nos. 54-55), addressed to him personally, was suppressed. Since the autograph contains no title, one had to be given: "A Treatise on the Manner of Visiting the Convents of the Discalced Nuns of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Composed by Mother Teresa of Jesus, their Foundress."

This edition of Padre Alonso served as the model for others until the last century. A faithful rendering of the text of the autograph did not appear until the critical edition of Padre Silverio in 1919.

Speaking frankly in this work with Gracián, who tended to be somewhat soft, Teresa offers to visitators the fruit of her experiences in religious life and of her understanding of the feminine psyche. She presents a series of practical counsels and suggestions so that a visitation might amount to something more than a mere formality. Her short treatise reveals solid common sense and realism as well as some keen powers of observation and insight into human nature.

K. K.

ON MAKING THE VISITATION

1. I confess, first of all, my imperfect obedience at the outset of this writing. Even though I desire the virtue of obedience more than anything else, beginning this work has been the greatest mortification for me, and I have felt a strong repugnance toward doing so. May it please our Lord that I succeed in saying something, for I trust only in His mercy and in the humility of the one who ordered me to write this, so that, through that humility, God, who is powerful, will do the work and not depend on me.

2. It seems an inappropriate thing to begin with temporal matters. Yet I think that these are most important for the promotion of the spiritual good, although in monasteries founded in poverty this doesn't seem to be so. But in all monasteries it is necessary to have good order and attend to matters concerning government and the harmonious organization of everything.

3. First, let it be presupposed as extremely appropriate that the visitor so behave toward the nuns that even though on the one hand he is affable and loving, on the other hand he makes it known that in essential matters he will be strict and by no means lenient. I don't believe there is anything in the world that harms a visitor as much as does being unfeared and allowing subjects to deal with him as with an equal. This is true especially in the case of women. Once they know that the visitor is so soft that he will pass over their faults and change his mind so as not to sadden them, he will have great difficulty in governing them.

4. It is very necessary that they understand there is some one in command, who is not tenderhearted, when it comes to matters that would weaken the religious observance. The judge must be so upright in administering justice that they become convinced he will not turn aside from whatever might be more perfect and for the greater service of God even if the whole world crumbles. And they must understand that he will be affable and

loving toward them as long as he knows there is no fault in the above. Just as it is necessary that he also show compassion and that he love them as a father—and this is very important for their consolation and that he not alienate them—so are these other qualities I mentioned necessary. And if either of these be lacking, it is incomparably better that the latter be lacking than the former.

5. The official visitation should take place once a year so that with love faults may be gradually corrected and removed. For if the nuns do not understand that at the end of the year those who have committed them will be corrected and punished, year after year goes by and the religious observance becomes so lax that when one wants to provide a remedy it is impossible to do so. Although the fault lies with the prioress, and even though she is changed for another, the nuns grow accustomed to the relaxation in observance. In our human nature custom is a terrible thing, and little by little, through small things, irremediable harm is done to the order. The visitor who does not provide a remedy in time will have to give a terrible accounting to God.

6. It seems to me that by dealing with these matters I'm being offensive to these monasteries of the Virgin, our Lady, since through the Lord's goodness they are far removed from any need for this severity. But it is my fear that makes me say this, a fear stemming from the fact that with time, through a lack of carefulness at the beginning, laxity usually creeps into monasteries. Also I see that each day through the goodness of God the nuns are making more progress. And in some communities there might have been some failure if the visitor had not done what I am saying here about severity in remedying these little things and deposing the prioresses whom they found were not suited for the job.

7. In this latter regard, especially, there must be no pity, because many prioresses will be very holy but not suited for the office of prioress, and it's necessary to remedy the matter quickly. Here, where there is so much concern for mortification and practices of humility, this will not be taken as an offense. If a nun should take it as an offense, it's obvious that she is not suited for the office. Anyone who has so little perfection that she wants

to be prioress should not be governing souls who are so much involved with the pursuit of perfection.

8. The visitor must keep God in mind and the favor the Lord has granted to these houses lest because of him the favor be lessened; and he should cast out all feelings of pity. The devil causes these for the sake of doing great harm. This pity is the greatest cruelty the visitor could show to the nuns.

9. It's impossible that all those elected prioresses will have the talent for the office. When it is realized that they do not, the first year should by no means pass without their being removed from office. In one year not much harm can be done but if three go by she could destroy the monastery by allowing imperfections to become the custom. And removing her from office is so extremely important that even if it kills him, because he thinks she is holy and her intentions good, he should force himself to do so. This is the only thing I ask, for the love of God. And if he should see that the nuns who are electing a prioress solicit or campaign, which God forbid, he should nullify the election and nominate prioresses from other monasteries for them to choose from. For no good can come from an election made in this way.

10. I don't know if what I've said belongs to the temporal or spiritual order.¹ What I wanted to begin with is that the visitor should examine very carefully and attentively the financial records and not pass over them lightly. Especially in houses having an income, it is very important that the expenses not exceed the income even though the community may have to go without something. For if they spend in accordance with their means, those houses founded with an income will have enough and get along very well, glory to God. Otherwise, if the community begins to go into debt, it will gradually be ruined. For in the event of great need, it will seem inhuman to major superiors to forbid individuals to keep money earned from their work or that relatives provide for them or similar things that are the practice now in different monasteries.² I would unquestionably prefer to see a monastery dissolved than to see it reach such a state. This is why I said³ that a lack of care in temporal matters can cause great harm in spiritual matters, and thus this advice is most important. In the monasteries founded in poverty,

the visitator should examine carefully and advise strongly so that the nuns do not go into debt, because if they have faith and serve God, they will not be in want—unless they spend too much.

11. In the monasteries, both those founded in poverty and those with an income, the visitator should learn in detail about the ration of food the nuns are given and about how they are treated, especially the sick, and he should see to it that the needs of the nuns are sufficiently taken care of. The Lord never fails to provide for these needs as long as the prioress has courage and diligence; experience teaches this.

12. In both kinds of monasteries⁴ he should take note of the work that is being done and even record what the nuns have earned by the work of their hands. This is useful for two reasons: first, so as to encourage and thank those who have done a great deal; second, so that in those monasteries where there is not so much care taken about work because there is not so much need the nuns may be told about what others earn. This keeping record of the handwork that is done, apart from the temporal advantages, has advantages in every other respect. And it is very consoling to the nuns when they are at work to know that it will be seen by the visitator. Even though this is not an important matter, we women who live so enclosed a life and whose consolation is found in pleasing the visitator should be treated at times with a sensitive understanding of our weaknesses.

13. He should inquire whether there is any excess in gift giving. This is particularly necessary in houses having an income, for prioresses could overdo it and destroy the monasteries through what seems of little importance. Should it happen that a prioress is extravagant, the nuns could be left without food, it having been given away, as has happened in some monasteries. For this reason, it is necessary to reflect on what can be done, on the amount of alms that can be given in accord with the income, and to have a reasonable and fixed amount for everything.

14. He should not easily consent to houses that are too large, or allow the nuns, without great necessity, to go into debt in order to build or add on to them. And for this it would be neces-

sary to give the order that no construction be undertaken without informing the major superior and giving an account of where it is to be done so that he may judge whether or not to give the permission. This should not be taken to refer to little things that cannot do much harm. But it is better that the nuns suffer the trouble of not having a good house than that they be worried, and disedifying to others, because of debts and lack of food.

15. It is very important that he always inspect the whole house to determine how recollection is preserved, for it is good that he remove the occasions and not trust in the sanctity he sees however great; no one knows the future. And thus it is necessary to think of all the evil that could arise, so that, as I say, the occasion may be removed. He should observe especially whether there be two grates at the grille in the parlor, one on the outside and one on the inside, and whether they are such that no hand can reach through. This is very important. He should look at the confessionals and see to it that the curtains are nailed over the confessional window and that the Communion window is small. The door at the entrance should have two bolts and there should be two keys for the door to the enclosure, as the *Acts*⁵ ordain, one of which is kept by the portress and the other by the prioress. I know that this is done now, but so that it will not be forgotten, I have put it down here, for it is always necessary that these things be looked into and that the nuns see that the visitor does so, and thus there will be no carelessness about them.

16. It is very important that he inquire about the chaplain, who the confessor is and whether there is more communication with him than necessary. And he should inquire very particularly about this from the nuns and also about the preservation of recollection in the house. And if some nun should be tempted to misjudge, he ought to listen to her very carefully. Even though often what she thinks will not be so, and she will exaggerate it, he can inquire about the truth from the other nuns putting them under the precept of obedience. And having found out the truth, he should afterward reprimand her severely so that this will not happen again.

17. And if some of the nuns are taken up with trifles or exaggerate things without there being any fault on the part of the

prioress, it's necessary to be strict with them and get them to realize their own blindness so that they don't go about disturbed. If they become aware that their conduct is no benefit to them but recognized for what it is, they will be quiet. When there is nothing serious, the prioresses should always be supported, even though the faults may be corrected. For the sake of peace and quiet, the simplicity of perfect obedience is a great help. The devil could tempt some nuns with the notion that they know better than the prioress and should go about always paying attention to things that matter little, and they could do much harm to themselves. The discreet visitor will recognize this and help them improve, although if they are melancholic he will have a great deal to do. He should never be softhearted with these latter, for if they think they're going to get somewhere, they'll never stop being a bother, nor will they themselves be at rest. They must realize always that they will be punished and that they must consequently support the prioress.

18. If some nun should perhaps speak of being transferred to another monastery, he must answer in such a way that neither she nor anyone would think that this is ever something possible. For no one except the one who has seen it happen can know the tremendous troubles that are apt to arise and how the door is open for the devil to tempt the nuns when they think it is possible to transfer from their monastery. They shouldn't think this no matter how great their reasons. And even if a transfer should have to be made, they must not be aware of the reason or think that it was made because they wanted it. Other subterfuges should be used, for she will never settle down anywhere, and much harm will be done to the other nuns. Let the nuns understand that the visitor will never in any way trust the nun who is trying to get a transfer from her house, and that even if he should have to transfer her, I mean because of some need or for some foundation, he will not do so if she is trying for one. This is all right to do because these temptations never come except to melancholics or those of such a temperament that they are not much help for anything. And perhaps it would even be good, before anyone try to do this, that he speak in a conference to the community about how harmful this is and the poor opinion he

will have of the one who considers this temptation, and he should give his reasons and explain how no one any longer can be transferred and that until now there were some occasions in which a transfer was necessary.⁶

19. He should inquire whether the prioress has some particular friendship with a nun, doing more for this one than for the others. As for the rest, he shouldn't bother unless there is some extreme, for prioresses need to deal more with those who have greater intelligence and discretion. And since our human nature doesn't allow us to recognize ourselves for what we are, each nun thinks she is an expert. Thus, the devil tempts them through trifles coming from inside so that there will always be war; but merit can be gained by resisting. Therefore, it will seem to them that this nun, or these others, are governing the prioress. The visitor should try to get her to moderate any excess that there may be in this friendship because it would occasion a great temptation for the weak nuns. But the friendship should not be taken away entirely, for, as I say, these persons could be the kind for whom it is necessary. However, it is always good to insist that there be no great familiarity with anyone. Soon the true colors will be seen.

20. There are some so extremely perfect, in their opinion, that everything they see seems to be a fault, and these are always the ones who have more faults themselves. But they don't see them and they put all the blame on the poor prioress or on the others. Thus they could fool the visitor into wanting to correct what is being done well. It is, as a result, necessary to avoid believing one nun alone, as I have said,⁷ and to inquire about something from the others before correcting it. In a monastery where there is so much rigor, life would become unbearable if each visitor, in each visitation, were to make new decrees. This is very important.⁸ Thus he should not make any decrees, unless the matter is serious and, as I say, he has inquired fully of the prioress herself and the other nuns about the correction he wants to make, and about why and how it should be done. For the nuns could become so weighed down with decrees that, unable to observe them, they will also give up what is more important in the rule.

21. What the visitorator should insist upon is that the nuns observe the constitutions. A prioress who takes great liberty in breaking the laws of the constitutions and does so for little reason or habitually, thinking that this or that matters little, will do great harm to the house. Let this be understood, and if it doesn't appear so at once, time will prove it. This is the reason monasteries and even religious orders have gone so astray in some places. They pay little attention to small matters and hence come to fall in very great ones. The visitorator should insist publicly with the nuns that they inform him of any fault in the monastery with regard to the constitutions and that if he should learn of something afterward he will punish severely the person who should have informed him. With this, the prioresses will be fearful and will proceed carefully.

22. It's necessary to avoid compromising with the prioress whether she becomes sad or not. Let her understand that this method of procedure is to be always followed and that the main reason she was elected to office is that she foster observance of the rule and constitutions and not remove or add according to her own whim and that there will be someone who will watch this and inform the visitorator. I hold that it is impossible for any prioress to fulfill her office well if she becomes upset that the visitorator learned of something she does. A sign that something is not done fully for the service of God is that I do not want it known by the one who stands in His place. And, thus, the visitorator should note whether there is openness and truth in the things the nuns discuss with him, and if there is not, he should reprimand them with great severity and strive by means of warnings to the prioress or officeholders, or by using other procedures, to foster this openness. Even though the nuns may not lie, they can cover up some things. But the head, through whose government one lives, must know everything. It isn't right for the nuns to hide what must be corrected from the visitorator, for a good body can do nothing without a head, and he is no less than that.

23. I conclude this matter by saying that if the constitutions are observed everything will run smoothly. If there is no great care for their observance or that of the rule, visitations will be of

little avail — this is the reason for them — unless the prioresses are changed. And even the nuns in the community may be transferred if, God forbid, this has already become a custom, and other nuns who are faithful in keeping the religious observance brought in, as though one were newly founding the monastery. And the former nuns should be divided and each placed in a different monastery, for one or two of them will not be able to do much harm in a well-regulated monastery.

24. It should be noted that there may be prioresses who will ask for some freedom with regard to certain things against the constitutions and will give, perhaps, enough reasons, in their opinion. Either they will perhaps know no better or they will try to make the visitator think this is appropriate. And even though these things may not go against the constitutions, they could be of such kind that it would be harmful to admit them. Since the visitator is not present, he doesn't know what harm there can be — and we know how to exaggerate in order to get what we want. For this reason the best policy is to keep the door closed to anything that is not in conformity with the way things are going now since we see that they are going well and are proven by experience. The certain is better than the doubtful. And in these cases the visitator must be firm and not worry about saying no. Rather, he should act with the freedom and holy authority I mentioned at the beginning⁹ so that he is indifferent as to whether he pleases or displeases the prioresses and the nuns in matters that otherwise could cause some trouble in the future. And the fact that something is a novelty is reason enough for not starting it.

25. In regard to the permission to accept nuns, a very important matter, the visitator should not give it without receiving a full account. And he should inquire himself, if he is in a place where it is possible to do so, for there can be prioresses so fond of taking in nuns as to be satisfied with little. And if the prioress wants to admit someone and says that she is well informed, her subjects almost always agree with what she wants. But it could happen that the prioress might be inclined to admit an aspirant because she is a friend or relative or out of some other personal considerations. And she will think she is right and yet be wrong.

26. Any mistake made in admitting nuns can be easily reme-

died. But before allowing them to make profession, it is necessary to be most careful. If there are novices, the visitor at the time of the visitation should inquire about them so that he may make an informed judgment when the time comes to grant the license for profession. Possibly the novice is a friend and protégée of the prioress, and the subjects do not dare speak their mind; but they will to the visitor. And thus, if possible, it would be a good thing to delay the profession, if the time for it is near, until the superior comes to make his visitation. If it seems fitting, he should even tell them to send him the results of the secret balloting as is done for the election. So important is it not to keep anyone in the monastery who will be the cause of trouble and restlessness all her life that every care taken will be well worthwhile.

27. In the receiving of lay Sisters, it is necessary to take careful note because almost all the prioresses are fond of having many lay Sisters, and the houses become filled up, and sometimes with those who can do little work. Thus it's very necessary for him not to yield right away if he sees no notable need. He should inquire about the number of lay Sisters, for since the number has not been established, great harm can be done if there is no prudence about accepting them.

28. An effort should always be made in each house that the number of nuns be less than that allowed so that some vacancies may remain, for it could happen that someone, whom it would be very advantageous for the house to accept, might want to enter, and there will be no room. By no means should one consent to go beyond the fixed number, for this would open the door to no less than the destruction of the monasteries. For this reason it is better to deny what might be advantageous to one monastery than to do harm to them all. It could be, and this would be a remedy, that if in another monastery the number is not complete a nun could transfer to that monastery so that the aspirant might enter. But the nun who is transferring should be given the dowry or alms she brought with her, if she did so, since she will be in the other monastery permanently. But if this should be impossible, let what must be lost be lost, and let not something so harmful to everyone be started. The provincial must neces-

sarily be informed when permission is sought concerning the number of nuns so that he can decide what is fitting; in something so important it's not right to trust the prioresses.

29. It's necessary for the visitor to inquire about whether the prioresses have added more vocal prayers and penances than is obligatory. It could happen that each one, according to her own taste, might add particular things and so burden the nuns that they will lose their health and not be able to do what they are obliged to do. This must not be understood to apply when on some day there is a certain need. But there are usually some prioresses so indiscreet that they do this almost habitually, and the nuns do not dare speak, thinking this would show a lack of devotion. Nor is it right that they do speak except with the visitor.

30. He should look into how the vocal prayer is said in choir, whether chanted or recited, and inquire as to whether it is done slowly, and the chanting should be done in a soft voice which is edifying and in conformity with the life we profess. Chanting with a loud voice is doubly harmful: first, it sounds bad because the vocal prayer is not being sung; second, the reserve and spirit of our way of life are lost. If the above is not greatly insisted upon, they will go to excess and take away the devotion of those who hear them. The voices should be subdued and not manifest any concern on the part of the nuns about sounding nice to those who are listening. This concern has become almost universal, and it seems there will no longer be any remedy for it since it has become fashionable, and thus it is necessary to stress the above a great deal.

31. In regard to important commands, it would be very good for the visitor to order one of the nuns, under obedience, in the presence of the prioress, to write to him if any of the commands is not observed so that the prioress understands that the nun cannot do otherwise. The visitor thereby would in a way be present, for the nuns will proceed more carefully and be on their guard not to go against any of his orders.

32. Before the visitation takes place it would be appropriate for him to stress strongly how wrong it would be for prioresses to

take offense at Sisters who tell the visitor of faults they have seen. Even though these Sisters may be incorrect in their judgment, they are nonetheless obliged in conscience to do this. And in a place where mortification is the practice, it is a sure sign that a prioress is not fit to govern if she takes offense at the nuns on account of a deed that should please her because it helps her to serve our Lord and fulfill her office better. The next time they will not dare speak knowing that the visitor will go away and that they will be left with trouble; and everything could gradually grow lax. The visitor should make his remarks however holy the prioresses may be, and should not be trustful in this matter, for our human nature is weak and the enemy so skillful that when there are no other things with which to tempt he will strike hard here and perhaps gain what he loses elsewhere.

33. It is most fitting that the visitor observe great secrecy in everything and that the prioress be unable to ascertain who the informer is. For, as I have said,¹⁰ these nuns are still on earth. And if, for no other reason, he should do so at least for the sake of removing some temptation, how much more if the temptation is one that could do much harm.

34. If the things they say about the prioresses are not important, the visitor could make them known in a roundabout way so that it will not be known that the nuns have informed him. It is most fitting that insofar as possible he let the prioresses think that the nuns have nothing to say against them. But in important matters it is better that the situation be corrected than that the prioresses be pleased.

35. It is very important that he inquire whether any money gets into the hands of the prioresses without the knowledge of the key-bearers, for this could happen without her adverting to it, or even whether she possesses anything except in conformity with the constitutions.¹¹ This is also necessary in houses founded in poverty. It seems to me I have said this before,¹² and the same will happen with other things; but as the days go by I forget and do not want to take the time to read this over.

36. It will be very bothersome for the visitor to attend to

the many trifling matters referred to here, but it will be more bothersome for him when from his not doing so he sees the backsliding that will result. As I have said,¹³ however holy the nuns may be, it is necessary for him to attend to these matters. And, as I have said at the beginning,¹⁴ the most important thing in the government of women is the necessity of their understanding that they have a head who will not be moved for anything on earth and that he has to observe and comply with all that pertains to religious observance and to punish what is contrary to it. They must perceive that he takes special care about this in each house and that he not only makes a visitation once a year but wants to know what they are doing every day. In this way, they will go on growing in perfection rather than diminishing, for women, in general, are upright and fearful.

37. And what I said is very important so that there be no carelessness. And sometimes, when necessary, action should accompany words; if he punishes one for something, others will avoid it. If out of compassion, or for other motives, he does the opposite at the beginning, when things are small, he will be forced to act more rigorously afterward. And these acts of pity will turn out to be the greatest cruelty, and he will have to render an exact account to God, our Lord.

38. There are some nuns with such great simplicity that they think it is a serious fault on their part to tell the visitor about the faults of the prioresses in matters that have to be corrected. These nuns must be told that even though they may think this an unworthy action they are obliged to do so and also that they should beforehand humbly tell the prioress when they see that she is at fault in observing the constitutions or in matters of importance, for it could be that she doesn't realize this. They should even tell her to correct it, and if afterward she is displeased with them, they should accuse her. There is much ignorance about what to do in these visitations, and thus it is necessary that the visitor discreetly call their attention to this and instruct them.

39. It is very important to inquire about procedures concerning the confessor, and not from one or two nuns but from all of them, and about how much power he is given. Since he is not

the vicar, nor must there ever be one, for this office was taken away so that he might not have such power, it is important that communication with him be only very moderate, and the less there is the better. And the prioress should be very careful with regard to giving gifts and complimentary presents, unless they are very small; although sometimes one cannot avoid giving something. The prioress should rather pay the chaplain more than what is his due from the chaplaincy than have this concern, for it brings with it many troubles.

40. It is also necessary to counsel the prioresses not to be too generous and liberal but to keep in mind that they are obliged to reflect on how they spend money. They are no more than stewards and must not spend as if the money were their own but according to reason and with great care so that their expenditures are not excessive. Apart from the obligation not to disedify, the prioress is obliged in conscience to use this care and to take charge of temporal matters, and not keep especially for herself anything that the others do not have, unless the key to a desk or drawer for keeping papers, I mean letters or similar things, for it is right that these be kept secret, especially if they contain some counsels from the provincial.

41. He should observe whether the habit and toque are made as prescribed in the constitutions. If, God forbid, there should appear at some time something that seems to be an adornment, and not very edifying, he should make the nun burn it in his presence. By his doing something like this, the nuns will be frightened and correct the fault, and the incident will be recounted to those who come in the future.

42. He should also notice their manner of speaking, that it be simple, plain, and religious, more in the style of hermits and solitaries, and that they don't begin to adapt the latest fashionable expressions or the sweet talk, I believe they call it, used in the world, for new things are ever coming into style. In these matters, let them glory in appearing somewhat boorish rather than highly polished.

43. Insofar as possible they should avoid lawsuits, for the Lord will by other means grant them what they might lose by

foregoing a lawsuit. He should always guide them so that they will keep to what is more perfect, and he should order them not to undertake or undergo any lawsuit without informing the provincial and following his special orders.

44. He should warn them, with respect to new members being received into the community, to esteem the personal talents of aspirants more than what they bring with them. No one should be admitted out of self-interest, but in accord with the constitutions, especially if there is some fault in that person's temperament.

45. It is necessary that visitators of the future follow what is done now by the provincial that the Lord has given us.¹⁵ I have taken much of what I've said here from observing his visitations, especially the following point: he shows no more familiarity to one Sister (in such a way that he spends time alone with her or writes to her) than he does to all, but he shows love to all together as a true father. The day in which a visitator in some monastery should have a particular friendship, even though it may be like that between St. Jerome and St. Paula, he will not escape the critical remarks of others, anymore than those two did. And not only will it do harm in that monastery but in all of them, for the devil will at once make it known so as to gain something. Because of our sins the world has gone so astray in this respect that many troubles arise, as is now seen.

46. If the visitator should act in this way, he would be held in less esteem and lose the general love that all the nuns, if he were what he ought to be, would have for him, as they do have now. For they will think that he has set his love on one alone, and it is very advantageous for him to be much loved by all. This does not refer to times in which necessity may require some special attention, but to things that are noticeable and excessive.

47. Let him keep in mind that when he enters the house (I mean the monastery, to visit the enclosure), for it is right that he always do so and that he inspect carefully the whole house, as has already been said,¹⁶ that he should be accompanied by his companion and by the prioress and a few other nuns. By no means, even if this takes place in the morning, should he stay to

eat in the monastery, even if they urge him to do so. But let him carry out his tasks and then leave immediately. If he wants to talk, it is better that he do so at the grille in the parlor. Even though he could do otherwise in complete goodness and simplicity, it would be a beginning. And perhaps with the passing of time someone might come along to whom it would not be fitting to give so much freedom, and he may want to take more. May it please the Lord not to allow this, but may these things, and everything else always be done in an edifying way as they are now, amen, amen.

48. The visitor should never allow them to go to excess in the meals given him during the days of the visitation but consent only to what is appropriate. If he notices otherwise, let him diligently correct this, for it would not be in keeping with the profession of the visitors, which is that of poverty, nor with that of the nuns, nor would it be of benefit to anyone. The visitors should eat no more than what is sufficient, otherwise they would not be giving appropriate edification to the nuns. As for the present, with regard to this excess, I don't think there could be much of a remedy, because the visitor we have doesn't notice whether the food given him is little or much, good or bad, nor do I know if he is capable of recognising the difference unless someone very carefully draws his attention to it.

49. He is most cautious to be alone, without a companion, when he has the official interviews, for he does not want it to be known if there is any fault in the nuns. It's something to be admired when the childish doings of the nuns, if there be any, are kept secret. Now, glory to God, little harm is done because the visitor looks upon things as would a father and thus keeps them secret; and God reveals the seriousness of the task to him, for he stands in God's place. Someone who does not stand in God's place will perhaps think that what amounts to nothing is a great matter. Since such a one does not have the responsibility that the visitor has, he takes little care about not speaking of these things, and the reputation of the monastery is lost for no reason. May it please our Lord that the visitors keep these things in mind so as to behave always in this way.

50. It is not fitting for the visitor to show any great love for the prioress or that he gets along well with her, at least not in the presence of all the nuns. For this will make them lose courage, and they will not dare tell him her faults. He should be very aware that they have to know that he will correct whatever has to be corrected. There is no affliction like the one that comes to a soul zealous for God and the order when she becomes anxious at seeing that the order is failing and hopes that the visitor will correct the matter only to find out that everything remains the same. Seeing the little good that it did her to speak up, she turns to God and decides to be quiet from then on even though everything crumbles.

51. The poor nuns are heard no more than once, that is, when they are called for the official interview, whereas the prioresses have much time for excusing faults and giving reasons and setting their own times for speaking with the visitor, and will perhaps suggest that the poor nun who may have said something is over emotional. Even though he may not be told who this nun is, the visitor will more or less understand to whom these prioresses are referring. He is not himself a witness, but things are told to him in such a way that he cannot help believing them. For these reasons, after the visitation, everything stays as it was. If he could be a witness within the community for many days, he would know the truth. The prioresses do not think they are untruthful, but this self love of ours is such that it's a wonder if we ever blame ourselves, nor do we know ourselves.

52. I myself have experienced this many times, and with prioresses who were very, very great servants of God whom I trusted so much that it seemed to me impossible for the facts to be otherwise. Yet once, after spending some days in a house, I was amazed to see something so contrary to what I had been told, in an important matter, that I came to recognize along with almost half the community the partiality involved, and it was the prioress herself who did not realize this as afterward she came to understand. Since the devil does not have many opportunities to tempt the Sisters, I think he tempts the prioresses so

that they might have opinions in some matters different from those of the Sisters; and to see how these latter suffer everything is something for which to praise our Lord. Thus it is now my practice not to believe anyone until I have gathered all the information so that I can make the one who has been deceived understand that she has. Without proceeding in this way, it would be difficult to correct a wrong. Nothing of this refers to serious faults, but if we do not proceed with care, the faults could grow worse.

53. I am amazed to see the subtlety of the devil and how he makes each one think she is telling the greatest truth in the world. This is why I have said¹⁷ that complete trust should not be given to the prioress or to any nun in particular but that information should be gathered from a greater number, when dealing with something important, so that an effective remedy may be provided. May our Lord provide such a remedy by always giving us a holy and prudent visitor, for if he possesses these qualities, he will be enlightened by His Majesty so as to do the right thing in all and come to know us. In this way the government will be very good, and souls will grow in perfection for the honor and glory of God.¹⁸

54. I beg your Paternity, in payment for the mortification I underwent in writing this, that you undergo the same by writing yourself some counsels for visitors. If anything useful has been said here, it can be put into better order; and it will be helpful. Now I am going to begin the final part of the Foundations,¹⁹ and this can be added there; for it will prove very beneficial. Yet, I am afraid that there will be no one else so humble, as the one who ordered me to write, that he will want to benefit from it. But if God wants this, such a one will be unable to do otherwise. If these monasteries are visited in the way that is now customary in the order, there will be little fruit;²⁰ and there could come more harm than good. In fact, it would be necessary to mention many more things than I have here (for either I don't know them or I don't remember them now). Greater care is necessary only at the beginning. If the nuns understand that the

visitation will be carried out in this way, there will be little trouble in governing them.

55. Do your part by writing those counsels I mentioned about the way in which Your Paternity now proceeds in these visitations.²¹ Through His mercy and the merits of these Sisters, our Lord will provide the rest since the Sisters' intention is to do what is right for His service in everything and to be taught how to do so.

A SATIRICAL CRITIQUE

INTRODUCTION

ONCE IN PRAYER Teresa heard the words, "seek yourself in me." In awe over the meaning they might contain, she sent them to her brother Don Lorenzo so that he might reflect on them. Lorenzo took the matter so seriously that, unable to penetrate what lay hidden in the words, he decided to consult his spiritual friends. The consultation was a serious and solemn one at which the consultants were gathered in the parlor of the monastery of St. Joseph in Avila at Christmas time in 1576. Those who took part in the discussion, in the presence of the nuns and the bishop of Avila, were Francisco de Salcedo, Julián de Avila, Don Lorenzo de Cepeda, and St. John of the Cross. As the discussion was in progress the circle of friends began to feel keenly the absence of Madre Teresa. At the time she was staying in Toledo, but she was a member of the community of Avila and it was there that she had chosen to reside in obedience to the orders of the prior general. The outcome was a decision by the bishop that those present should write out their reflections on the meaning of the words and that these be sent to Teresa for her judgment. The nuns also sent their reflections.

The style of Teresa's response is shaped by the kind of satirical ceremony that was at that time held in Spanish universities before conferral of the doctor's degree. In these comical sessions the candidate became the subject of some festive bantering by professors and students. Teresa states expressly "I have no intention of saying anything good about what the contestants have written" (no. 3). Her critique, then, of their written reflections sparkles with a kind of playful satire.

With the exception of nos. 8-9, the autograph text is con-

served in the monastery of the Carmelite nuns in Guadalajara. The last two numbers are taken from the text found in the edition of Teresa's letters published in Zaragosa in 1658 by Palafox.

None of the contestants' responses has been preserved save Don Lorenzo's. The nuns of St. Joseph's had also sent their reflections, but all that we know of Teresa's judgment of them is contained in her letter to Don Lorenzo, January 2, 1577: "Some of the Sisters' replies made me laugh. Others were extremely good and have given me light on the matter." As for Teresa's own thoughts on the words, they may in part be found in her poem *Seeking God*.

K. K.

A SATIRICAL CRITIQUE

On the Words "Seek Yourself in Me"

1. If obedience had not forced me, I would certainly not have answered, nor, for certain reasons, would I have accepted the role of judge. But none of my reasons is the one the Sisters here give: namely, that my brother is among the contestants and that seemingly affection will distort justice. Indeed, I love all the contestants since each of them has helped me bear my trials. My brother came along at the end of my drinking from the chalice, although he has shared in some part of it and will share in it more with the Lord's help. With the condition my head is in after the many letters and business matters I have been attending to from last night till now, I ask God to give me the grace not to say anything that might merit my being denounced to the Inquisition. But obedience can do all, and thus I will do what Your Excellency commands, whether it turns out good or bad. I have desired to enjoy myself for a while reflecting on the contestants' papers that were sent to me, but I have had no chance to do so.

On Francisco de Salcedo's Reply

2. It seems that the motto, "Seek yourself in Me" is said by the Spouse of our souls. Well, an indication that Señor Francisco de Salcedo errs is that he stresses so much that God is in all things; the Spouse knows that He is in all things.

3. Señor Francisco also says a great deal about the intellect and union. It is well known that in union the intellect does not work. If it does not work, how can it seek? That which he says, quoting David, "I will hear what God speaks within me,"¹ pleased

me very much, for this peace in the faculties (referred to by the word "people") is to be highly esteemed. But I have no intention of saying anything good about what the contestants have written. Thus, I say that the explanation is off the mark because the motto does not say "let us hear," but "let us seek."

4. And worst of all, if he does not retract what he wrote, I will have to denounce him to the Inquisition which is nearby. For after quoting again and again throughout the entire paper words of St. Paul and the Holy Spirit, he refers, in signing his paper, to the things he wrote as stupidities. Let him correct this at once; if he doesn't he will see what happens!

On Julián de Avila's Reply

5. He began well, but ended poorly; thus, the honor should not be given to him. They didn't ask him here to explain how the uncreated and the created light are joined but how we seek ourselves in God. Nor did we ask him what a soul feels when it is united with its Creator. And if it is united with Him, how does it have an opinion about whether there is a difference or not? In this union the intellect is, I think, incapable of entering into these disputes. If it were capable, it could easily understand the difference that lies between the Creator and the creature. The contestant also says, "when it is purified." I believe that neither virtues nor purifications are enough here because the union is a supernatural thing, and God gives it to whom He wants. If there is something that disposes for this union, it is love. But I forgive him his errors because he did not go on at such length as did my Father Fray John of the Cross.

On Father Fray John of the Cross's Reply

6. In his answer he presents very good doctrine for anyone who might want to follow the exercises they make in the Society of Jesus but not for what we have in mind. Seeking God would be very costly if we could not do so until we were dead to the world. The Magdalene was not dead to the world when she found him,

nor was the Samaritan woman or the Canaanite woman.² Furthermore, he treats a great deal about becoming one with God in union. But when this union comes about and God grants the soul this favor, one would not say that the soul seeks Him but that it has already found Him.

7. God deliver me from people so spiritual that they want to turn everything into perfect contemplation, no matter what. Nonetheless, we are grateful to him for having explained so well what we did not ask. Thus, it is good to speak always of God, for where we do not expect it, benefit will come to us.

Señor Lorenzo de Cepeda's Reply

8. So, benefit has come to us in Señor Lorenzo de Cepeda's reply. We are very grateful to him for his couplets and response. If he has spoken of more than he understands, we pardon him—because of the recreation he has given us—for his little humility in getting into such sublime matters, as he himself says in his answer. And in regard to the good counsel he gives (without having been asked for it), that they practice the prayer of quiet, as if this were in their power: anyone who does this already knows the affliction to which it obliges her.

Please God that since he is near the honey³ something good will stick to him, for his answer gave me great consolation—although he was very right in being ashamed of it. In this respect, it is impossible to judge which reply is better, for since without my doing an injustice to any of them by so stating, each of the replies has its faults.

Recommendations to Don Alvaro

9. Your Excellency should order the contestants to make amends. I, myself, will make amends by not being like my brother in his little humility. All these gentlemen are so divine that they have lost by going beyond what was asked by the question. As I have said,⁴ one would not tell the soul that attains this favor of union with God to seek Him, for it already possesses Him.

I kiss Your Excellency's hand many times for the favor you granted me with your letter. So as not to tire you further with these silly things, I am not writing now.

Unworthy servant and subject of Your Excellency,

Teresa of Jesus

RESPONSE TO A SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE

INTRODUCTION

THIS WORK TAKES on the form of a tournament and is cast in the model of those jousts of the Middle Ages in which knights participated. Of course, here the contest regards the world of the spirit. While Teresa was prioress at the Incarnation, a spiritual challenge arrived from "the knights and the daughters of the Virgin," probably from the discalced friars and nuns of Pastrana. It was addressed to the nuns at the Incarnation.

In her reply, Teresa gave notice that her nuns would enter the contest only under certain conditions. Though the text of the challenge is unknown, one can suppose, considering its source, that it included some eccentric and extreme forms of penance and austerity, things that were foreign to Teresa's feel for balance and humility. Thus the responses from the Incarnation lean toward the unexceptional and emphasize what is more authentic.

Out of the twenty-four extant answers, one of them is most probably from St. John of the Cross, who was then confessor at the Incarnation. And at the end, the serious tone of them all is suddenly broken by an amusing touch of wit in the response of the prioress, Teresa of Jesus. The time of the writing is not certain, possibly sometime at the end of 1572 or the beginning of 1573.

Up to the eighteenth century the autograph was conserved in the monastery of the Carmelite nuns in Burgos except for the last page, which is still conserved by the Carmelite nuns in Guadalajara. But a copy of the autograph is preserved at the Biblio-

teca Nacional in Madrid in volume 4 (Ms. 6.615) of the Teresian letters edited by Antonio de San José. That copy has provided the text for editors of Spanish editions. But, skipping from folio 2 to folio 8, the autograph from which it was made did not provide the complete text. In this translation we have followed the text of that copy, which is as close as one can come to the original.

K. K.

RESPONSE TO A SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE

1. After reading the cartel, it seemed that our forces would be incapable of taking to the field against such valiant and strong knights, for these latter would certainly win the victory and leave us totally despoiled of our provisions and even, perhaps, intimidated so that we'd be unable to do what little we could. With this in view, no one—Teresa of Jesus least of all—wanted to sign the challenge. Such is the unfeigned and absolute truth.

2. We resolve to do what lies within our strength, and after spending some days in the exchange of these courtesies, it could be that, with the favor and help of those who might want to take part, we'd be able to sign the cartel within a few days.

3. We will sign under the condition that the defender not turn his back by entering those caves, but he must take to the field of this world where we are. It might happen that in seeing himself always at war where it is necessary not to lay down one's arms, or grow careless, or have a moment of safe rest, he will not be so filled with fury. For there is a great difference between the two and between speaking and acting, for we shall shortly understand the difference that lies between them.

4. Come out, come out from that pleasant life, we say to him and his companions. It may happen that they will so quickly begin stumbling and falling that it will be necessary to help them get up. For it is a terrible thing to be always in danger and loaded down with arms and without food. Well, the defender provided so amply that he quickly sends the sustenance he promises. Should he win by starving us, he would gain little honor or benefit.

5. Any knight or daughter of the Virgin who asks the Lord each day to keep Beatriz Juarez in His grace and makes the effort never to speak inadvertently and to direct all things to the

Lord's glory will be given the merit she has gained in two years while caring for Sisters with very painful illnesses.

6. Sister Ana de Vergas says that if the said knights or brothers ask the Lord to remove the opposition she is undergoing and give her humility she will give them all the merit she will thereby gain if the Lord should grant it.

7. Mother Subprioress asks that those mentioned beg the Lord to take away her self-will and says that she will give them what she may have merited in two years. Her name is Isabel de la Cruz.

8. Sister Sebastiana Gómez says that to any of those mentioned who will look at the crucifix three times a day in memory of the three hours the Lord hung on the cross and thereby obtain for her the grace to conquer a strong passion which torments her, she will apply the merit she gains (if the Lord grant it) in the conquering of that passion.

9. Mother María de Tamayo will give a third part of what she suffers to any of those mentioned who recites every day an Our Father and a Hail Mary that the Lord might give her patience and conformity to His will in the endurance of her illness; this she will give each day. And her illness is very serious; for more than a year she has been unable to speak.¹

10. Sister Ana de la Miseria says that to any of the knights or daughters of the Virgin who should ask Jesus Christ, while considering the poverty in which He was born and died, that spiritually she might give what she promised to His Majesty she will give all the merit she might have before the Lord despite the faults she commits in His service.

11. Sister Isabel de Santángelo will give a share in what she has gained from the trials of soul she has undergone to any of the knights and daughters of the Virgin who accompanies the Lord during the three hours He remained alive on the cross and obtains from His Majesty the grace for her to keep her three vows with perfection.

12. Sister Beatriz Remón says that she will give a year of her merits to any brother or daughter of the Virgin who asks our Lady each day to grant her humility and obedience.

13. Sister María de la Cueva gives three years of her merits to any knight or daughter of the Virgin who prays to our Lady for her each day in faith and light and grace. (I know that Sister's merits are many, for she suffers great interior trials.)

14. Sister María de San José says that she will give one year of her merits to anyone of those mentioned who asks of the Lord humility and obedience for her.

15. Sister Catalina Alvarez says that she gives to anyone who asks the Lord to grant her self-knowledge one year of her sufferings, which is a great deal.

16. For any knight or Sister who prays to our Lady to obtain the grace from her Son so that Sister Leonor de Contreras might serve Him and persevere, this latter Sister will recite three *Salves* each day as long as she lives, and thus they must pray for her each day.

17. Sister Ana Sánchez says that for any knight or daughter of the Virgin who daily asks the Lord to give her His love she will recite daily three Hail Marys in honor of the purity of our Lady.

18. Sister María Gutiérrez says that she will give a part of all her merits with the Lord to any of those mentioned who pray that she be granted perseverance and perfect love of God.

19. Sister María Cimbrón says that those mentioned who pray each day for a happy death for her will have a part in all she merits through her suffering; it has been a long time since she has been able to stir from her bed, and she is close to the end.²

20. Sister Inés Díaz says that for anyone of those mentioned who prays that she might share in the Blessed Virgin's feelings at the foot of the cross she will recite, each day that they do so, five Our Fathers and Hail Marys.

21. Sister Juana de Jesús says that to any of the knights and Sisters mentioned who ask the Lord each day to give her contrition for her sins she will give a share in what she merits from her many trials, which are certainly many, and the affronts she has suffered because of them.

22. Sister Ana de Torres says that to those mentioned she will

give what she merits this year if they pray each day that through the torment the Lord suffered when He was nailed to the cross she might be given the grace to succeed in serving Him and to obey.

23. Sister Catalina de Velasco says that to anyone of those mentioned who asks the Lord, through the pain He suffered when He was nailed to the cross, to give her the grace not to offend Him and that our order continue to grow she will give those times that she spends with our Lady each day; they are indeed many.

24. Sister Jerónima de la Cruz says that to anyone of those mentioned who prays that she be given humility, patience, and light to serve the Lord she will recite three Creeds each day and offer a year of the trials she has suffered. This petition must be made for her each day.

25. A knight-errant³ says that if the Grand Master of the field obtains for him the grace he needs to serve the Lord perfectly in all that which obedience asks of him, he will give in return all the merit he gains this year in serving the Lord through obedience.

26. Sister Estefanía Samaniego says that for any knight or daughter of the Virgin who prays to our Lord that she might serve Him and not offend Him and be given living faith and meekness she will recite each day the prayer in honor of the name of Jesus and offer the merits gained from a year of illnesses and temptations that she has suffered.

27. Sister Antonia del Aguila says that to any knight or daughter of the Virgin who recalls our Lady's sorrows for a time each day and prays that she might be helped in a matter of great need for her soul and that our Mother prioress, Teresa of Jesus, live long for the increase of our order, she will give a third part of her trials and illnesses for the rest of her life.

28. Teresa of Jesus says that to any knight of the Virgin who makes each day a very resolute act of willingness to suffer all his life from a superior who is very wicked, vicious, gluttonous, and badly disposed to him she will give, each day that he does so, half of what she merits that day both in her Communion and

the many sufferings she bears; in sum, her merits in everything, which will be very little. He must consider the humility with which the Lord stood before the judges and how this Lord was obedient even to the death of the cross. This contract is valid for a month and a half.

POETRY

INTRODUCTION

Whoever reads the spiritual treatises of St. John of the Cross must read his poetry as well since his prose works are closely linked to his poetry. St. Teresa, on the other hand, kept her spiritual treatises separate from her poetry, and as a result the latter has suffered a kind of neglect.

As for her impulse to write poetry, Teresa has left an important statement in her *Life*: "Oh, help me God! What is the soul like when it is in this state! It would want to be all tongues so as to praise the Lord. . . . I know a person who though not a poet suddenly composed some deeply-felt verses well expressing her pain. They were not composed by the use of her intellect; rather, in order that she enjoy the glory so delightful a distress gave to her, she complained of it in this way to God" (ch. 16, no. 4). The impulses of love, pain over the absence of the beloved, joy in his presence, longings for death, and even a certain hatred of life, these are the common themes of lovers, and especially of mystics, the great lovers of God. In her ardent moments of love, Teresa was not interested in writing poems for their own sake; she wrote them as a release for the mystical fire she could no longer contain in her heart.

But this was not the only circumstance under which she felt urged to express herself in verse. Besides her lyric-mystical poetry, she composed many didactic and devotional poems. In a word, she also made use of poetry as an instrument of spiritual formation for her daughters. Keenly sensitive to the thousand happenings around her, she enjoyed speaking in verse of her perceptions. She understood the captivating and suggestive power of poetry with its rhythms and sounds and used it to impress on the hearts of her daughters profound teachings about the religious and spiritual life. At the same time she was delighting them with

rhymes and cadences. Teresa, then, also thought of poetry as something to be enjoyed. She once thanked her brother Lorenzo for the verses he had sent her and for the "recreation" she found in reading his couplets. She was especially happy when the nuns put her verses to music and devoutly sang them.

In the minds of her acquaintances Teresa was a good poet. Padre Julián de Avila, who accompanied her on so many of her journeys through Spain, wrote of how she frequently entertained the other travelers by composing poems and that these poems were very good ones. In seeking a critical judgment of the merits of her poetry, one finds at present a difference of opinion. Two critics who have recently approached the question have come to different conclusions. Angel Custodio Vega thinks that in her mystical poetry Teresa has reached sublime heights; whereas Victor de la Concha thinks that as a poet Teresa is at most mediocre.¹ Whatever one may think of the merits of Teresa's poetry, it is definitely written in a popular vein, notably simple and spontaneous.

When asked about the number of poems written by Madre Teresa, one can only speculate. Certainly, not all have been preserved, nor do we even know if we have a record of each of those that has been preserved. The poems we do have in our possession come to a number proportionately small when compared to what the number would be were we to have them all. According to María de San José, Teresa composed many romances about the variety of events that took place on her journeys to make foundations. And Ana de la Encarnación testifies that Madre Teresa was devoted to the saints and composed verses to sing on their feastdays. Ana de Jesús declares that during the Christmas season Teresa would compose words for carols to be sung by the nuns. Probably, in addition, a number of Teresa's poems were not written down at all but were composed on the spot and recited orally so as to contribute to the celebration of some special occasion.

The pieces of paper on which her poems were written were easy to pass around and easy to lose. Thus we do not have the autographs of Teresa's poetry. Recently, however, the Teresian scholar Tomás Alvarez did find in some Italian monasteries the

first autograph fragments of Teresa's poems.² This discovery leaves scholars with the hopes that more may be found.

As for copies, the most important are those made by Padre Andrés de la Encarnación and preserved in manuscript 1400 in the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid. Padre Andrés was given the task in 1754 of seeking out all of Teresa's writings in the archives and libraries of Spain. Modern editors base their editions of the poetry on the copy made by Padre Andrés. But both the lack of autographs and the mixture of Teresa's poetry with that of other Carmelites give rise to the problem of authenticity, particularly the authenticity of some of the poems. Further critical study needs to be done. We selected for this translation those poems that Tomás Alvarez included in his Spanish edition³ and are grateful to Father Adrian J. Cooney for contributing to this volume by his English rendering of them. Rather than sacrifice the meaning of each verse for the sake of a metre and rhyme scheme as found in the original poems, the translator sought to provide a rendering that is both accurate and lyrical.

K.K.

POETRY

Translated by
Adrian J. Cooney, O.C.D.

1.

Vivo Sin Vivir En Mí

*Vivo sin vivir en mí,
Y de tal manera espero,
Que muero porque no muero.*

Vivo ya fuera de mí,
Después que muero de amor,
Porque vivo en el Señor,
Que me quiso para sí.
Cuando el corazón le di
Puso en él este letrero:
Que muero porque no muero.

Esta divina prisión,
Del amor con que yo vivo,
Ha hecho a Dios me cautivo.
Y libre mi corazón
Y causa en mí tal pasión,
Ver a Dios mi prisionero,
Que muero porque no muero.

¡Ay, que larga es esta vida!
¡Que duros estos destierros!
Esta cárcel y estos hierros
En que el alma está metida!
Sólo esperar la salida
Me causa un dolor tan fiero,
Que muero porque no muero.

Aspirations toward Eternal Life

*I live without living in myself,
And in such a way I hope,
I die because I do not die.*

Since I die of love,
Living apart from love,
I live now in the Lord,
Who has desired me for Himself.
He inscribed on my heart
When I gave it to Him:
I die because I do not die.

Within this divine prison,
Of love in which I live,
My God my captive is.
My heart is free
To behold my prisoner-God,
Passion welling in my heart,
I die because I do not die.

Ah, how weary this life!
These exiles so hard!
This jail and these shackles
By which the soul is fettered!
Longing only to go forth
Brings such terrible sorrow,
I die because I do not die.

¡Ay, qué vida tan amarga
Do no se goza el Señor!
Porque si es dulce el amor,
No lo es la esperanza larga.
Quíteme Dios esta carga,
Más pesada que el acero,
Que muero porque no muero.

Sólo con la confianza
Vivo de que he de morir,
Porque muriendo el vivir
Me asegura mi esperanza.
Muerte do el vivir se alcanza,
No te tardes, que te espero,
Que muero porque no muero.

Mira que el amor es fuerte.
Vida, no me seas molesta.
Mira que sólo me resta
Para ganarte perderte.
Venga ya la dulce muerte,
El morir venga ligero.
Que muero porque no muero.

Aquella vida de arriba,
Que es la vida verdadera,
Hasta que esta vida muera,
No se goza estando viva.
Muerte, no me seas esquivo;
Viva muriendo primero,
Que muero porque no muero.

Vida, ¿que puedo yo darte
A mi Dios, que vive en mí,
Si no es el perderte a ti,
Para merecer ganarte?
Quiero muriendo alcanzarte,
Pues tanto a mi amado quiero:
Que muero porque no muero.

Ah, how bitter a life
When the Lord is not enjoyed!
While love is sweet,
Long awaiting is not.
O God, take away this burden
Heavier than steel,
I die because I do not die.

Only with that surety
I will die do I live,
Because in dying
My hope in living is assured.
Death, bringing life,
Do not tarry; I await you,
I die because I do not die.

See how love is strong.
Life, do not trouble me.
See how all that remains
Is in losing you to gain.
Come now, sweet death,
Come, dying, swiftly.
I die because I do not die.

That life from above,
That is true life,
Until this life dies,
Life is not enjoyed.
Death, be not aloof;
In dying first, may life be,
I die because I do not die.

Life, what can I give
To my God living in me,
If not to lose you,
Thus to merit Him?
In dying I want to reach
Him alone whom I seek:
I die because I do not die.

2.

En Las Manos De Dios

*Vuestra soy, para Vos nací,
¿Qué mandáis hacer de mí?*

Soberana Majestad,
Eterna sabiduría,
Bondad buena al alma mía;
La gran vileza mirad
Dios, alteza, un ser, bondad.
Que hoy os canta amor así:
¿Qué mandáis hacer de mí?

Vuestra soy, pues me criastes,
Vuestra, pues me redimistes,
Vuestra, pues que me sufristes,
Vuestra, pues que me llamastes,
Vuestra, pues que me esperastes,
Vuestra, pues no me perdí.
¿Qué mandáis hacer de mí?

¿Que mandais, pues, buen
Señor,
Que haga tan vil criado?
¿Cual oficio le habéis dado
A este esclavo pecador?
Veisme aquí, mi dulce Amor,
Amor dulce, veisme aquí,
¿Qué mandáis hacer de mí?

Veis aquí mi corazón,
Yo le pongo en vuestra palma,
Mi cuerpo, mi vida y alma,
Mis entrañas y afición,
Dulce Esposo y redención,
Pues por vuestra me ofrecí,
¿Qué mandáis hacer de mí?

Dadme muerte, dadme vida,
Dad salud o enfermedad,
Honra o deshonra me dad,

In the Hands of God

*I am Yours and born for you,
What do You want of me?*

Majestic Sovereign,
Unending wisdom,
Kindness pleasing to my soul;
God sublime, one Being Good,
Behold this one so vile.
Singing of her love to you:
What do You want of me?

Yours, you made me,
Yours, you saved me,
Yours, you endured me,
Yours, you called me,
Yours, you awaited me,
Yours, I did not stray.
What do You want of me?

Good Lord, what do you want
of me,
What is this wretch to do?
What work is this,
This sinful slave, to do?
Look at me, Sweet Love,
Sweet Love, look at me,
What do You want of me?

In Your hand
I place my heart,
Body, life and soul,
Deep feelings and affections mine,
Spouse — Redeemer sweet,
Myself offered now to you,
What do You want of me?

Give me death, give me life,
Health or sickness,
Honor or shame,

Dadme guerra o paz crecida,	War or swelling peace,
Flaqueza o fuerza cumplida,	Weakness or full strength,
Que a todo digo que sí,	Yes, to these I say,
<i>¿Qué mandáis hacer de mí?</i>	<i>What do You want of me?</i>

Dadme riqueza o pobreza,	Give me wealth or want,
Dad consuelo o desconsuelo,	Delight or distress,
Dadme alegría o tristeza,	Happiness or gloominess,
Dadme infierno o dadme cielo,	Heaven or hell,
Vida dulce, sol sin velo,	Sweet life, sun unveiled,
Pues del todo me rendí.	To you I give all.
<i>¿Qué mandáis hacer de mí?</i>	<i>What do You want of me?</i>

Si queréis, dadme oración,	Give me, if You will, prayer;
Si no, dadme sequedad,	Or let me know dryness,
Si abundancia y devoción,	An abundance of devotion,
Y si no esterilidad,	Or if not, then barrenness.
Soberana Majestad,	In you alone, Sovereign Majesty,
Sólo hallo paz aquí,	I find my peace,
<i>¿Qué mandáis hacer de mí?</i>	<i>What do You want of me?</i>

Dadme, pues, sabiduría,	Give me then wisdom.
O por amor, ignorancia,	Or for love, ignorance,
Dadme años de abundancia,	Years of abundance,
O de hambre y carestía	Or hunger and famine.
Dad tiniebla o claro día,	Darkness or sunlight,
Revolvedme aquí o allí.	Move me here or there:
<i>¿Qué mandáis hacer de mí?</i>	<i>What do You want of me?</i>

Si queréis que esté holgando,	If You want me to rest,
Quiero por amor holgar;	I desire it for love;
Si me mandáis trabajar,	If to labor,
Morir quiero trabajando.	I will die working:
Decid, ¿dónde, cómo y cuándo?	Sweet Love say
Decid, dulce Amor, decid.	Where, how and when.
<i>¿Qué mandáis hacer de mí?</i>	<i>What do You want of me?</i>

Dadme Calvario o Tabor,	Calvary or Tabor give me,
Desierto o tierra abundosa,	Desert or fruitful land;
Sea Job en el dolor,	As Job in suffering
O Juan que al pecho reposa;	Or John at Your breast;

Sea viña fructuosa
O estéril, si cumple así.
¿Qué mandáis hacer de mí?

Sea José puesto en cadenas,
O de Egipto Adelantado
O David sufriendo penas,
O ya David encumbrado,
Sea Jonás anegado,
O libertado de allí,
¿Qué mandáis hacer de mí?

Esté callando o hablando,
Haga fruto o no le haga,
Muéstrame la ley mi llaga,
Goce de Evangelio blando;
Esté penando o gozando,
Sólo Vos en mi vivid,
¿Qué mandáis hacer de mí?

Vuestra soy, para Vos nació,
¿Qué mandáis hacer de mí?

Barren or fruited vine,
Whatever be Your will:
What do You want of me?

Be I Joseph chained
Or as Egypt's governor,
David pained
Or exalted high,
Jonas drowned,
Or Jonas freed:
What do You want of me?

Silent or speaking,
Fruitbearing or barren,
My wounds shown by the Law,
Rejoicing in the tender Gospel;
Sorrowing or exulting,
You alone live in me:
What do You want of me?

Yours I am, for You I was born:
What do You want of me?

3.

Sobre Aquellas Palabras
"Dilectus Meus Mihi"

Yo toda me entregué y di,
Y de tal suerte he trocado,
Que mi Amado para mí,
Y yo soy para mí Amado.

Cuando el dulce Cazador
Me tiró y dejó rendida,
En los brazos del amor,
Mi alma quedó caída;
Y cobrando nueva vida,
De tal manera he trocado
Que mi Amado para mí,
Y yo soy para me Amado.

On Those Words
"Dilectus Meus Mihi"

Myself surrendered and given,
The exchange is this:
My Beloved is for me,
And I am for my Beloved.

When the Gentle hunter
Wounded and subdued me,
In love's arms,
My soul fallen;
New life receiving,
Thus did I exchange
My Beloved is for me,
And I am for my Beloved.

<p>Tiróme con una flecha Enerbolada de amor, Y mi alma quedó hecha Una con su Criador. Ya yo no quiero otro amor, Pues a mi Dios me he entregado, <i>Y mi Amado para mí,</i> <i>Y yo soy para mí Amado.</i></p>	<p>The arrow he drew Full of love, My soul was oned With her Creator. Other love I want not, Surrendered now to my God, <i>That my Beloved is for me,</i> <i>And I am for my Beloved.</i></p>
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4.

Coloquio Amoroso

Loving Colloquy

<p>Si el amor que me tenéis, Dios mío, es como el que os tengo, Decidme ¿en qué me detengo? O Vos ¿en qué os detenéis? —Alma ¿qué quieres de mí? —Dios mío, no más que verte. —Y ¿qué temes más de ti? —Lo que más temo es perderte. Un alma en Dios escondida ¿Qué tiene que desear, Sino amar y más amar, Y en amor toda escondida Tornarte de nuevo a amar?</p> <p>Un amor que ocupe os pido, Dios mío, mi alma os tenga, Para hacer un dulce nido Adonde más la convenga.</p>	<p>If the love You have for me, Is like the love I have for You, My God, what detains me? Oh, what is delaying You? —Soul, what is it you desire of me? —My God, nothing other than to see You. —What is it that you fear more than self? —What I fear most is the loss of You. A soul hidden in God, What has it to desire Save to love more and more, And, in love all hidden Again and again to love You?</p> <p>One all possessing love I ask My God, my soul centered in You, Making a delightful nest, A resting place most pleasing.</p>
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5.

Feliz El Que Ama a Dios

Dichoso el corazón enamorado
Que en solo Dios ha puesto el
pensamiento
Por él renuncia todo lo criado,

Y en él halla su gloria y su
contento.

Aun de sí mismo vive
descuidado,

Porque en Dios está todo su
intento,

Y así alegre pasa y muy gozoso
Las hondas de este mar
tempestuoso.

Happy the Enamored Heart

Happy the enamored heart,
Thought centered on God
alone,
Renouncing every creature for
Him,

Finding in Him glory and
contentment.

Living forgetful of
self,

In God is all its intention,

Happy and so joyfully it journeys
Through waves of this stormy
sea.

6.

Ante La Hermosura De Dios*

¡Oh, Hermosura que excedéis
A todas las hermosuras!
Sin herir dolor hacéis,
Y sin dolor deshacéis,
El amor de las criaturas.

Oh, ñudo que así juntáis
Dos cosas tan desiguales,
No sé por que os desatáis,
Pues atado fuerza dais
A tener por buen los males.

Juntáis quien no tiene ser
Con el Ser que no se acaba;
Sin acabar acabáis,

Oh Exceeding Beauty

Oh Beauty exceeding
All other beauties!
Paining, but You wound not
Free of pain You destroy
The love of creatures.

Oh, knot that binds
Two so different,
Why do You become unbound
For when held fast You strengthen
Making injuries seem good.

Bind the one without being
With being unending;
Finish, without finishing,

*For the origin of this poem, see the postscript in her letter to Don Lorenzo, Jan. 2, 1577; and also her letter to him on Jan. 17, 1577.

Sin tener que amar amáis,
 Engrandecéis nuestra nada.

Love, without having to love,
 Magnify our nothingness.

7.

Ayes Del Destierro

Sighs in Exile

¡Cuan triste es, Dios mío,
 La vida sin ti!
Ansiosa de verte,
Deseo morir.

My God, how sad is
 Life without You!
Longing to see You,
Death I desire.

Carrera muy larga
 Es la de este suelo,
 Morada penosa,
 Muy duro destierro.
 ¡Oh Dueño adorado!
 Sácame de aquí.
Ansiosa de verte,
Deseo morir.

This earth's journey
 How long it is;
 A painful dwelling,
 An exile drear.
 Oh, Master adored,
 Take me away!
Longing to see You,
Death I desire.

Lúgubre es la vida,
 Amarga en extremo;
 Que no vive el alma
 Que está de ti lejos.
 ¡Oh dulce bien mío,
 Que soy infeliz!
Ansiosa de verte,
Deseo morir.

Dismal is life,
 Bitter as can be:
 The soul lifeless,
 Apart from You.
 O my sweet Goodness,
 How sad am I!
Longing to see You,
Death I desire.

¡Oh muerte benigna,
 Socorre mis penas!
 Tus golpes son dulces,
 Que el alma libertan.
 ¡Que dicha, oh mi amado,
 Estar junto a Ti!
Ansiosa de verte,
Deseo morir.

O kind death
 Free me from trials!
 Gentle are your blows,
 Freeing the soul.
 Oh, my Beloved, what joy
 To be oned to You!
Longing to see You,
Death I desire.

El amor mundano
 Apega a esta vida;
 El amor divino
 Por la otra suspira.
 Sin ti, Dios eterno,
 ¿Quien puede vivir?
Ansiosa de verte,
Deseo morir.

La vida terrena
 Es continuo duelo:
 Vida verdadera
 La hay sólo en el cielo.
 Permite, Dios mío,
 Que viva yo allí,
Ansiosa de verte,
Deseo morir.

¿Quien es el que teme
 La muerte del cuerpo,
 Si con ella logra
 Un placer inmenso?
 ¡Oh! si, el de amarte,
 Dios mío, sin fin.
Ansiosa de verte,
Deseo morir.

Mi alma afligida
 Gime y desfallece.
 ¡Ay! ¿Quien de su amado
 Puede estar ausente?
 Acabe ya, acabe
 Aqueste sufrir,
Ansiosa de verte,
Deseo morir.

El barbo cogido
 En doloso anzuelo,
 Encuentra en la muerte
 El fin del tormento.

To this life
 Worldly love adheres;
 Love divine
 For the other sighs.
 Eternal God, without You,
 Who can live?
Longing to see You,
Death I desire.

Unending sorrow
 Is this earthly life;
 Life that is true
 In heaven alone is found.
 My God, allow
 That there I may dwell.
Longing to see You,
Death I desire.

Who fears
 The body's death
 If one then gains
 Pleasure so great?
 Oh, yes, in loving You,
 Forever, my God!
Longing to see You,
Death I desire.

Afflicted, my soul
 Sighs and faints.
 Ah, who can stay apart
 From her Beloved?
 Oh! end now,
 This my suffering.
Longing to see You,
Death I desire.

The fish caught
 On the painful hook,
 In death's embrace
 Its torment ending.

¡Ay! también yo sufro,
 Bien mío, sin ti:
Ansiosa de verte,
Deseo morir.

En vano mi alma
 Te busca, oh mi dueño;
 Tu siempre invisible
 No alivias su anhelo
 ¡Ay! esto la inflama
 Hasta prorrumper:
Ansiosa de verte,
Deseo morir.

¡Ay! cuando te dignas
 Entrar en mi pecho,
 Dios mío, al instante
 El perderte temo.
 Tal pena me aflige,
 Y me hace decir:
Ansiosa de verte,
Deseo morir.

Haz, Señor, que acabe
 Tan larga agonía;
 Socorre a tu sierva
 Que por ti suspira.
 Rompe aquestos hierros
 Y sea feliz.
Ansiosa de verte,
Deseo morir.

Mas no, dueño amado,
 Que es justo padezca;
 Que expíe mis yerros,
 Mis culpas inmensas.
 ¡Ay! logren mis lágrimas
 Te dignes oír
Ansiosa de verte,
Deseo morir.

Ah, how I suffer,
 Without You, my Love.
Longing to see You,
Death I desire.

Master, my soul
 In vain seeks You!
 Always unseen
 You leave me anxiously longing.
 Ah! the very longing inflames
 Until I cry out:
Longing to see You,
Death I desire.

When at last
 You enter my heart,
 My God, then at once
 I fear your leaving.
 The pain that touches me
 Makes me say,
Longing to see You,
Death I desire.

Lord, end now
 This long agony.
 Comfort your servant
 Sighing for You.
 Shatter the fetters
 Let her rejoice.
Longing to see You,
Death I desire.

Ah, no, Beloved Master,
 It is only that I suffer
 My sins to atone
 My guilt unbounded
 Ah! may my tears gain
 Your listening to me:
Longing to see You,
Death I desire.

8.

Buscando A Dios

*Alma, buscarte has en Mí,
Y a Mí buscarme has en ti.*

De tal suerte pudo amor,
Alma, en mí te retratar,
Que ningún sabio pintor
Supiera con tal primor
Tal imagen estampar.

Fuiste por amor criada
Hermosa, bella, y así
En mis entrañas pintada,
Si te perdieres, mi amada,
Alma, buscarte has en Mí.

Que yo sé que te hallaras
En mi pecho retratada
Y tan al vivo sacada
Que si te ves te holgaras
Viéndote tan bien pintada.

Y si acaso no supieres

Donde me hallarás a Mí,
No andes de aquí para allí,
Sino, si hallarme quisieres
A Mí buscarme has en ti.

Porque tú eres mi aposento,
Eres mi casa y morada,
Y así llamo en cualquier tiempo,
Si hallo en tu pensamiento
Estar la puerta cerrada.

Fuera de ti no hay buscarme,
Porque para hallarme a Mí,
Bastará solo llamarme,
Que a ti iré sin tardarme
Y a Mí buscarme has en ti.

Seeking God

*Soul, you must seek yourself in Me
And in yourself seek Me.*

With such skill, soul,
Love could portray you in Me
That a painter well gifted
Could never show
So finely that image.

For love you were fashioned
Deep within me
Painted so beautiful, so fair;
If, my beloved, I should lose you,
Soul, in yourself seek Me.

Well I know that you will discover
Yourself portrayed in my heart
So lifelike drawn
It will be a delight to behold
Yourself so well painted.

And should by chance you do
not know

Where to find Me,
Do not go here and there;
But if you wish to find Me,
In yourself seek Me.

Soul, since you are My room,
My house and dwelling,
If at any time,
Through your distracted ways
I find the door tightly closed,

Outside yourself seek Me not,
To find Me it will be
Enough only to call Me,
Then quickly will I come,
And in yourself seek Me.

9.

Eficacia De La Paciencia

Efficacy of Patience

Nada te turbe,
 Nada te espante,
 Todo se pasa,
 Dios no se muda,
 La Paciencia
 Todo lo alcanza;
 Quien a Dios tiene
 Nada le falta.
 Sólo Dios basta.

Let nothing trouble you,
 Let nothing scare you,
 All is fleeting,
 God alone is unchanging.
 Patience
 Everything obtains.
 Who possesses God
 Nothing wants.
 God alone suffices.

10.

Hacia La Patria

On the Way to Heaven

*Caminemos para el cielo,
 Monjas del Carmelo.*

*Toward heaven let us journey,
 Nuns of Carmel.*

Vamos muy mortificadas,
 Humildes y despreciadas,
 Dejando el consuelo,
Monjas del Carmelo.

Mortified, humble, and despised,
 Let us walk,
 Consolations left aside,
Nuns of Carmel.

Al voto de la obediencia
 Vamos, no haya resistencia,
 Que es nuestro blanco y
 consuelo,
Monjas del Carmelo.

Unresisting let us go
 To vowed obedience,
 Our consoling aim,
Nuns of Carmel.

La pobreza es el camino,
 El mismo por donde vino
 Nuestro Emperador del cielo,
Monjas del Carmelo.

Poverty is the way,
 The very road He came,
 Our heavenly Emperor,
Nuns of Carmel.

No deja de nos amar
 Nuestro Dios y nos llamar
 Sigámosle sin recelo,
Monjas del Carmelo.

Untiring in loving,
 Our God is calling;
 Trusting Him, let us follow,
Nuns of Carmel.

An amor se está abrasando
Aquel que nació temblando
Envuelto en humano velo
Monjas del Carmelo.

Vámonos a enriquecer,
A donde nunca ha de haber
Pobreza ni desconsuelo,
Monjas del Carmelo.

Al Padre Elías siguiendo
Nos vamos contradiciendo
Con su fortaleza y celo,
Monjas del Carmelo.

Nuestro querer renunciando,
Procuremos el doblado
Espíritu de Eliseo,
Monjas del Carmelo.

Afire in love's burning,
He, once born trembling,
Veiled in our humanity,
Nuns of Carmel.

Hasten to this enrichment
Where poverty and grief
Will never be,
Nuns of Carmel.

Elijah, our Father, leads,
In our self-denying we follow him
Strongly and zealously,
Nuns of Carmel.

Renouncing our will,
We long to attain
Elisha's double spirit,
Nuns of Carmel.

11.

Al Nacimiento De Jesús

To the Birth of Jesus

¡Ah, pastores que veláis,
Por guardar vuestros rebaños,
Mirad que os nace un Cordero,
Hijo de Dios Soberano!

Viene pobre y despreciado,
Comenzadle ya a guardar,
Que a lobo os le ha de llevar
Sin que le hayamos gozado.
—Gil, dame acá aquel cayado
Que no me saldrá de mano,
No nos lleven al Cordero:
—¿No ves que es Dios Soberano?

¡Sonzas! que estoy aturdido
De gozo y de penas junto.
—¿Si es Dios el que hoy ha
nacido,

Ah, shepherds watching,
Guarding your flocks!
Behold, a Lamb born for you,
Son of our Sovereign God.

Poor and despised He comes,
Begin now guarding Him,
Lest the wolf carry Him off.
Before rejoicing in Him,
Bring me your crook, Giles.
Firmly will I grasp it,
Preventing theft of the Lamb:
See you not He is Sovereign God?

Come now, bewildered am I
By joy and sorrow joined.
If today God be born,

Cómo puede ser difunto?
¡Oh, que es hombre también
junto!

La vida estará en su mano;
Mirad, que es este el Cordero,
Hijo de Dios Soberano.

No sé para qué le piden,
Pues le dan después tal guerra;
—Mía fe, Gil, mejor será
Que se nos torne a su tierra,
Si el pecado nos destierra,
Y está el bien todo en su mano.
Ya que ha venido padezca
Este Dios tan Soberano.

Poco te duele su pena;
¡Oh, como es cierto, del hombre
Cuando nos viene provecho,
El mal ajeno se esconde!
¿No ves que gana renombre
De pastor de gran rebaño?

Con todo, es cosa muy fuerte
*Que muera Dios Soberano.**

How can He then die?
Oh, since He is man as well,

Life in His hands will be!
In this Lamb behold,
The Son of our Sovereign God.

Why do they ask for Him
And then against Him war.
Giles, in faith it would be better
For Him to return to His land.
If by sin we are banished,
In His hand all good lies
Since to suffer He came,
This God truly sovereign.

His suffering so little troubles you:
Oh, how true of men.
When profit comes,
Evil we ignore!
Do you see He gains renown
As the Shepherd of the great
flock?

Terrible it is nonetheless
*That the Sovereign God should
die.*

12.

Al Nacimiento De Jesús

At the Birth of Jesus

Hoy nos viene a redimir

Giles, today there comes to
redeem us

Un Zagal, nuestro pariente,
Gil, que es Dios omnipotente.

A shepherd boy, our kinsman,
God Omnipotent!

Por eso nos ha sacado
De prisión a Satanás;

He frees us from
Satan's prison;

*The autograph of the two last stanzas is conserved in the monastery of the Discalced Carmelite nuns in Florence.

Mas es pariente de Bras,
Y de Menga, y de Llorente.
¡Oh, que es Dios omnipotente!

Pues si es Dios, ¿como es
vendido
Y muere crucificado?
—¿No ves que mató el pecado,
Padeciendo el inocente?
Gil, que es Dios omnipotente.

Mi fe, yo lo vi nacido
De una muy linda Zagala.
—Pues si es Dios ¿como ha
querido
Estar con tan pobre gente?
—¿No ves, que es
omnipotente?

Déjate de esas preguntas,
Muramos por le servir,
Y pues El viene a morir
Muramos con El, Llorente,
*Pues es Dios omnipotente.**

But He is kin of Bras,
Menga, and Llorente,
Oh, He is God Omnipotent!

If He be God, why sold
And crucified dies?
Giles, in His suffering innocently,
Do you see, He vanquished sin?
He is God Omnipotent.

Oh, I saw Him being born
Of a shepherdess most fair.
If He is God, why did He
desire
Among such poor folk to be?
*See you not that He is
Omnipotent?*

No more questioning,
Let us serve Him.
Llorente, since He comes to die,
Let us die with Him.
He is God Omnipotent.

13.

Para Navidad

Pues el amor
Nos ha dado Dios,
Ya no hay que temer,
Muramos los dos.

Danos el Padre
A su único Hijo:
Hoy viene al mundo

For Christmas

Since love
Has given us God
No reason is there to fear,
Let us both die.

The Father gives us
His only Son,
Born this day in a stable poor,

*The autograph of the thirteen first verses is conserved in the same Carmel of Florence. The autograph of the last two stanzas is conserved in the Carmel of Savona, also in Italy.

En un pobre cortijo.
 ¡Oh, gran regocijo,
 Que ya el hombre es Dios!
No hay que temer,
Muramos los dos.

Mira, Llorente
 Qué fuerte amorío,
 Viene el inocente
 A padecer frío;
 Deja un señorío
 En fin, como Dios,
No hay que temer,
Muramos los dos.

Pues, ¿como, Pascual,
 Hizo esa franqueza,
 Que toma un sayal
 Dejando riqueza?
 Mas quiere pobreza,
 Sigámosle nos;
 Pues ya viene hombre,
Muramos los dos.

Pues, ¿que le daran
 Por esta grandeza?
 Grandes azotes
 Con mucha crudeza.
 Oh, qué gran tristeza
 Será para nos:
 Si esto es verdad,
Muramos los dos.

Pues ¿cómo se atreven
 Siendo Omnipotente?
 Ha de ser muerto
 De una mala gente.
 Pues si eso es, Llorente;
 Hurtémosle nos,
 No ves que El lo quiere,
Muramos los dos.

To the world He comes.
 Oh, great rejoicing,
 Now man is God!
No reason is there to fear,
Let us both die.

Llorente, look,
 With what great love,
 The Innocent comes
 To suffer in the cold.
 He leaves His lordship,
 For He is God:
No reason is there to fear,
Let us both die.

Pascual, why did He
 So graciously take
 Garments so coarse
 Forsaking such richness?
 Let us follow Him,
 In seeking poverty;
 He became man for this.
Let us both die.

For a deed so great
 What can we give Him?
 Lashes severe
 Given so cruelly.
 Sorrow so deep
 Will be for us!
 Should this be true,
Let us both die.

Oh, how bold they are
 Daring the All Powerful!
 He will know death
 By an evil people.
 Llorente, if this be true,
 We must steal Him.
 Can you not see He wishes this?
Let us both die.

14.

Al Nacimiento Del Niño Dios

At the Birth of the Infant God

*Mi gallejo, mira quién llama.
 Angeles son, que ya viene
 el alba.*

*My Gallejo, look who is coming.
 Angels they are, the dawn
 is nigh.*

Hame dad un gran zumbido
 Que parece cantillana,
 Mira Bras, que ya es de día,
 Vamos a ver la zagala.
*Mi gallejo, mira quién llama.
 Angeles son, que ya viene
 el alba.*

My ears are ringing
 With what seems an old song
 Look, Bras, daylight is here.
 Let us go to the shepherdess.
*My Gallejo, look who is coming.
 Angels they are, the dawn
 is nigh.*

¿Es parienta del alcalde,
 U quién es esta doncella?
 Ella es hija de Dios Padre,
 Relumbra, como una estrella.
*Mi gallejo, mira quién llama.
 Angeles son, que ya viene
 el alba.*

Is she a relative of the Mayor,
 Or who is this maiden?
 God the Father's daughter,
 Glowing starlike.
*My Gallejo, look who is coming.
 Angels they are, the dawn
 is nigh.*

15.

A La Circuncisión

The Circumcision

Vertiendo está sangre,
 ¡Dominguillo, eh!
Yo no sé por qué.

He is shedding blood,
Dominguillo, eh!
Why I know not!

¿Por qué, te pregunto,
 Hacen dél justicia,
 Pues es inocente
 Y no tiene malicia?
 Tuvo gran codicia,
 Yo no sé por qué,
 De mucho amarme,
 ¡Dominguillo, eh!

I ask you why,
 Him they condemn,
 Innocent He is,
 And without evil?
 How ardent His desire,
 I know not why,
 To love me so ardently:
Oh, Dominguillo!

¿Pues luego en naciendo,
 Le han de atormentar?

Then after He was born,
 Why did they torment Him?

—Sí, que está muriendo
 Por quitar el mal;
 ¡Oh, que gran Zagal
 Será, por mi fe!
¡Dominguillo, eh!

¿Tú no lo has mirado,
 Que es niño inocente?
 —Ya me lo han contado
 Brasillo y Llorente;
 Gran inconveniente
 Será no amalle,
¡Dominguillo, eh!

—Yes, for He is dying
 To cast out evil.
 Oh, what a great Shepherd
 He will surely be!
Oh, Dominguillo!

Certainly you have seen
 He is but a sinless child?
 —They have told me,
 Brasillo and Llorente;
 Great will be the loss
 Not to love Him
Oh, Dominguillo!

16.

Otra A La Circuncisión

Another on the Circumcision

*Este Niño viene llorando;
 Mírale, Gil, que te está
 llamando.*

*This little Child comes crying,
 Look, Giles, He calls you.*

Vino del cielo a la tierra
 Para quitar nuestra guerra;
 Ya comienza la pelea,
 Su sangre está derramando,
*Mírale, Gil, que te está
 llamando.*

To earth from heaven He came
 Our warring to end.
 Already the battle rages,
 His blood is flowing:
Look, Giles, He calls you.

Fue tan grande, el amorío,
 Que no es mucho estar llorando,
 Que comienza a tener brío,
 Habiendo de estar mandando.
*Mírale, Gil, que te está
 llamando.*

So strong is his loving,
 His crying is without surprise.
 Courage grows within Him,
 For He is to lead.
Look, Giles, He calls you.

Caro nos ha de costar,
 Pues comienza tan temprano,
 A su sangre derramar,
 Habremos de estar llorando
*Mírale, Gil, que te está
 llamando.*

How great the price will be
 Since He begins so young
 Bleeding for us.
 Oh, weeping we should be.
Look, Giles, He calls you.

No viniera El a morir
 Pues podía estarse en su nido,
 ¿No ves, Gil, que si ha venido
 Es como león bramando?
*Mírale, Gil, que te está
 llamando.*

Has He not come to die,
 For in His dwelling He could stay.
 Giles, do you see He has come
 As a roaring lion?
Look, Giles, He calls you.

Dime Pascual, ¿que me quieres,
 Que tantos gritos me das?
 Que le ames, pues to quiere,
 Y por ti está tiritando;
*Mírale, Gil, que te está
 llamando.*

Pascual, why do you shout?
 What do you want?
 Love Him for He loves you
 And shivers here for you.
Look, Giles, He calls you.

17.

En La Festividad De Los
 Santos Reyes

On the Feast of the
 Holy Kings

*Pues la estrella
 Es ya llegada,
 Vaya con los Reyes
 La mi manada.*

*Now that the star
 Has come,
 Accompany the Kings,
 Go, my flock.*

Vamos todos juntos
 A ver el Mesías,
 Pues vemos cumplidas
 Ya las profecías;
 Pues en nuestros días,
 Es ya llegada,
*Vaya con los Reyes
 La mi manada.**

Together let us go
 The Messiah to behold.
 We see fulfilled now
 The prophet's words:
 In these our days,
 At last He has come.
*Accompany the Kings,
 Go, my flock.*

Llevémosle dones
 De grande valor,
 Pues vienen los Reyes
 Con tan gran hervor.
 Alégrese hoy

Our gifts so dear
 Let us bring Him.
 With fervor so full,
 The Kings are coming.
 Today may she rejoice,

*The autograph of the first twelve verses is conserved in the Carmel of Savona, Italy.

Nuestra gran Zagala,
Vaya con los Reyes
La mi manada.

No cures, Llorente,
 De buscar razón,
 Para ver que es Dios
 Aqueste garzón;
 Dale el corazon,
 Y yo esté empeñada,
Vaya con los Reyes
La mi manada.

Our shepherdess so grand.
Accompany the Kings,
Go, my flock.

Llorente, trouble not
 In seeking a reason,
 For He is God,
 This young Boy.
 While I in debt fall,
 Give Him your heart.
Accompany the Kings,
Go, my flock.

18.

A La Cruz

To the Cross

Cruz, descanso sabroso de mi
vida
Vos seáis la bienvenida.

Oh, bandera, en cuyo amparo
 El más flaco será
 fuerte;
 Oh, vida de nuestra muerte,
 Qué bien la has resucitado
 Al león has amansado.
 Pues por ti perdió la vida,
Vos seáis la bienvenida.

Quien no os ama está cautivo
 Y ajeno de libertad;
 Quien a vos quiere allegar
 No tendrá en nada desvío.
 Oh dichoso poderío,
 Donde el mal no halla cabida,
Vos seáis la bienvenida.

Vos fuisteis la libertad
 De nuestro gran cautiverio;
 Por vos se reparó mi mal

O Cross, my life's delightful
rest,
My welcome be.

Beneath your protecting banner
 Even the weakest are made
 strong!
 O life of our death,
 Reviving it so well.
 Having tamed the lion,
 By you he was slain:
My welcome be.

Captive is he that loves you not,
 No freedom does he know;
 Those who approach you
 From bad paths are saved.
 Oh, in this Kingdom blessed
 Evil finds no rest:
My welcome be.

You are the freedom
 From our dread captivity;
 With so precious remedy,

Con tan costoso remedio
 Para con Dios fuiste medio
 De alegría conseguida,
Vos seáis la bienvenida.

From evilness You restored me.
 In God the means
 Of this joy obtained:
My welcome be.

19.

El Camino De La Cruz

The Way of the Cross

*En la cruz está la vida
 Y el consuelo,
 Y ella sola es el camino
 Para el cielo.*

*Within the cross is life
 And consolation.
 It alone is the road
 Leading to heaven.*

En la cruz está el Señor
 De cielo y tierra,
 Y el gozar de mucha paz,
 Aunque haya guerra.
 Todos los males destierra
 En este suelo,
*Y ella sola es el camino
 Para el cielo.*

The Lord of heaven and earth
 Is on the cross.
 On it, too, delight in peace.
 Though war may rage,
 It banishes all evil
 Dwelling here on earth.
*It alone is the road
 Leading to heaven.*

De la cruz dice la Esposa
 A su Querido
 Que es una palma preciosa
 Donde ha subido
 Y su fruto le ha sabido
 A Dios del cielo,
*Y ella sola es el camino
 Para el cielo.*

From the cross the bride
 To her Beloved says
 This is a precious palm
 Upon which she has climbed,
 Its fruit tasting
 Like the God of paradise:
*It alone is the road
 Leading to heaven.*

Es una oliva preciosa
 La santa cruz,
 Que con su aceite nos unta
 Y nos da luz.
 Alma mía, toma la cruz
 Con gran consuelo,
*Y ella sola es el camino
 Para el cielo.*

This sacred cross,
 An olive tree so dear,
 With its oil anoints us
 Giving us light.
 My soul, take up this cross
 Rich with consolations great.
*It alone is the road
 Leading to heaven.*

Es la cruz el árbol verde
Y deseado
De la Esposa, que a su sombra
Se ha sentado.
Para gozar de su Amado
El Rey del cielo,
*Y ella sola es el camino
Para el cielo.*

El alma que a Dios está
Toda rendida,
Y muy de veras del mundo
Desasida,
La cruz le es árbol de vida
Y de consuelo,

*Y ella sola es el camino
Para el cielo.*

Después que se puso en cruz
El Salvador,
En la cruz está la gloria
Y el honor,
Y en el padecer dolor
Vida y consuelo,
*Y el camino más seguro
Para el cielo.*

This cross is the verdant tree
Desired by the bride.
In its cool shade
Now she is resting,
Delighting in her Beloved,
Heaven's King:
*It alone is the road
Leading to heaven.*

The soul to God
Is wholly surrendered,
From all the world
Now truly free,
The cross is at last
Her "Tree of Life" and
consolation:
*It alone is the road
Leading to heaven.*

After our Saviour
Upon the cross placed Himself,
Now in this cross is
Both glory and honor.
In suffering pain
There is life and comfort,
*And the safest road
Leading to heaven.*

20.

Abrazadas A La Cruz

*Caminemos para el cielo
Monjas del Carmelo.*

Abracemos bien la Cruz
Y sigamos a Jesús,
Que es nuestro camino y luz
Lleno de todo consuelo,
Monjas del Carmelo.

Embracing the Cross

*To heaven let us walk,
Nuns of Carmel.*

Embracing the cross,
Let us follow Jesus,
He is our way and light
Abounding in consolations,
Nuns of Carmel.

Si guardáis más que los ojos
 La profesión de tres votos,
 Libraros de mil enojos,
 De tristeza y desconsuelo,
Monjas del Carmelo.

Guard more than your eyes,
 Your three vows professed
 From a thousand vexations
 Of sadness and distress,
Nuns of Carmel.

El voto de la obediencia,
 Aunque es de muy alta ciencia,
 Jamás se la hace ofensa
 Sino cuando hay resistencia.
 De ésta os libre Dios del cielo,
Monjas del Carmelo.

The vow of obedience,
 Is of great wisdom,
 Only in resisting it
 Does harm come.
 Heaven deliver you,
Nuns of Carmel.

El voto de castidad
 Con gran cuidado guardad.
 A solo Dios desead,
 Y en El mismo os encerrad,
 Sin mirar cosa del suelo,
Monjas del Carmelo.

Keep with great care
 Chastity's vow;
 Seek God alone,
 Be cloistered in Him,
 Look at nothing earthly,
Nuns of Carmel.

El que llaman de pobreza,
 Si se guarda con pureza,
 Está lleno de riqueza
 Y abre las puertas del cielo,
Monjas del Carmelo.

What is named poverty
 If with purity kept
 Is with riches overflowing
 Opening Heaven's Gates,
Nuns of Carmel.

Y si así lo hacemos
 Los contrarios venceremos
 Y a la fin descansaremos
 Con el que hizo tierra y cielo,
Monjas del Carmelo.

Opponents we conquer
 In following this way,
 At last we will rest in
 The Maker of Heaven and Earth,
Nuns of Carmel.

21.

A San Andrés

To Saint Andrew

¿Si el padecer con amor
 Puede dar tan gran deleite?
 ¡Que gozo nos dara el verte!

*If suffering for love's sake
 Can give such wondrous delight?
 What joy will gazing on You be?*

¿Qué será cuando veamos
A la eterna Majestad,
Pues de ver Andrés la cruz
Se pudo tanto alegrar?
¡Oh, que no puede faltar
En el padecer deleite!
¡Qué gozo nos dará el verte!

El amor cuando es crecido
No puede estar sin obrar,
Ni el fuerte sin pelear,
Por amor de su Querido.
Con esto le habrá vencido,
Y querrá que en todo acierte,
¡Que gozo nos dara el verte!

Pues todos temen la muerte
¿Como te es dulce el morir?
¡O, que voy para vivir
En más encumbrada suerte!
¡Oh mi Dios! que con tu muerte
Al más flaco hiciste fuerte:
¡Qué gozo nos dará el verte!

¡Oh Cruz! madero, precioso
Lleno de gran majestad,
Pues siendo de despreciar
Tomaste a Dios por esposo.
A ti vengo muy gozoso,
Sin merecer el quererte.
Esme muy gran gozo el verte.

What will it be beholding
The Majesty eternal
Since Andrew seeing the cross
Was so filled with rejoicing?
Oh, how can it be wanting,
Delight in suffering's midst!
What joy will gazing on You be?

Love, when it has grown,
Save in laboring cannot live,
Nor the hearty without fighting
Because of love for his Beloved.
By this love is victory won
And the desire to be right in all.
What joy will gazing on You be.

Since all people dread dying,
Why is it sweetness to You?
Oh, I will live
In a loftier way.
By Your death, O my God,
The weakest knows strength.
What joy will gazing on You be?

O cross, wood so precious
Majestic and grand!
Once greatly despised,
Now espoused to God,
With rejoicing I come,
Unworthy to love you.
What joy will gazing on You be?

22.

A San Hilarion

*Hoy vencido un guerrero
Al mundo y a sus valedores.
Vuelta, vuelta, pecadores,
Sigamos este sendero.*

To Saint Hilarion

*Today a warrior has conquered
The world and its defenders.
Return, return, sinners,
Let us follow this path.*

Sigamos la soledad
Y no queramos morir,
Hasta ganar el vivir
En tan subida pobreza.
¡Oh, qué grande es la destreza
De aquéste nuestro guerrero!
*Vuelta, vuelta, pecadores,
Sigamos este sendero.*

Con armas de penitencia
Ha vencido a Lucifer,
Combate con la paciencia,
Ya no tiene que temer.
Todos podemos valer
Siguiendo este caballero,
*Vuelta, vuelta, pecadores,
Sigamos este sendero.*

No ha tenido valedores,
Abrazóse con la cruz:
Siempre en ella hallamos luz

Pues la dio a los pecadores.
¡Oh, qué dichosos amores
Tuvo este nuestro guerrero!
*Vuelta, vuelta, pecadores,
Sigamos este sendero.*

Ya ha ganado la corona,
Y se acabó el padecer,
Gozando ya el merecer,
Con muy encumbrada gloria.
¡Oh venturosa victoria
De nuestro fuerte guerrero!
*Vuelta, vuelta, pecadores,
Sigamos este sendero.*

In solitude let us be
And cease longing for death
Until gaining life
Through poverty sublime.
Oh, great is the skilfulness
Our Warrior has!
*Return, return, sinners,
Let us follow this path.*

With penance as His arms,
Lucifer He vanquished,
In patience He fights,
Nothing frightens Him.
We, too, can conquer
In following this Knight!
*Return, return, sinners,
Let us follow this path.*

Without any defenders,
The cross He embraced
In this our source of unwavering
light,

Given to us sinners.
Ah, what blessed love
Our Warrior possessed!
*Return, return, sinners,
Let us follow this path.*

Now the crown he has won,
Suffering has passed,
Rejoicing in His triumph
In glory exalting.
Oh, victory, most fortunate
Won by our Warrior strong!
*Return, return, sinners,
Let us follow this path.*

23.

A Santa Catalina Martir

To Saint Catalina, Martyr

¡Oh gran amadora
Del Eterno Dios
Estrella luciente,
Amparadnos vos!

Desde tierna edad
Tomaste Esposo
Fue tanto el amor,
Que no os dio reposo.
Quien es temeroso,
No se llegue a Vos,
Si estima la vida
Y el morir por Vos.

Mirad los cobardes
Aquesta doncella,
Que no estima el oro
Ni verse tan bella.
Metida en la guerra
De persecución,
Para padecer
Con gran corazón.

Mas pena le da
Vivir sin su Esposo
Y así en los tormentos
Hallaba reposo:
Todo le es gozoso,
Querría ya morir,
Pues que con la vida
No puede vivir.

Las que pretendemos
Gozar de su gozo,
Nunca nos cansemos,
Por hallar reposo,
¡Oh engaño engañoso,

O great lover
Of God eternal!
Shining star
Protect us!

In years so tender
A Spouse you took,
So ardent the love,
You knew no rest.
He that is fearful
Away from You should stay.
If life he values
And from death would run.

Oh, you cowards, see
This little maid
Who values not gold
Nor her beauty admires.
She embraces the war
And persecution endures
To suffer bravely
With heart truly great.

Greater suffering would it be
Without her Spouse to live;
In torments' midst
Rest she found.
Joy comes abounding.
Now she longs to die,
For in living
She cannot live.

Those of us seeking
Her joy to possess
Never may we weary,
Seeking our rest.
Oh, mistake deceiving,

Y que sin amor,
Es querer sanar,
Viviendo el dolor!

Free of all love,
Desiring to be healed
While pain is living.

24.

A La Vestición De La Hermana
Jerónima De La Encarnación

For the Clothing of Sister
Jerónima De La Encarnación

¿Quién os trajo acá doncella,
Del valle de la tristura?
—Dios y mi buena ventura.

Who has brought you here young
lady
From the valley of grieving?
—God and my good fortune.

25.

Al Velo De La Hermana
Isabel De Los Angeles

For the Veiling of Sister
Isabel De Los Angeles

*Hermana, porque veléis,
Os han dado hoy este velo,
Y no os va menos que el cielo;
Por eso, no os descuidéis.*

*So that you will be watchful,
Sister,
Today they have veiled you;
On that your Heaven depends;
Do not be careless.*

Aqueste velo gracioso
Os dice que estéis en vela,
Guardando la centinela
Hasta que venga el Esposo,
Que, como ladron famoso,
Vendrá cuando no penséis;
Por eso, no os descuidéis.

This veil so graceful
Proclaims you keep vigil,
The watchful sentinel
Awaiting her Bridegroom,
Who as the famed thief
Will come with surprise;
Do not be careless.

No sabe nadie a cuál hora,
Si en la vigilia primera
O en la segunda o tercera,
Todo cristiano lo ignora.
Pues velad, velad, hermana,
No os roben lo que tenéis;
Por eso, no os descuidéis.

That hour is unknown,
What watch it will be,
First, second, or third;
All Christians know not,
So watch, watch, sister,
Lest your treasure be stolen.
Do not be careless.

En vuestra mano encendida
 Tened siempre una candela,
 Y estad con el velo en vela,
 Las renes muy bien ceñidas.
 No estéis siempre amodorrida,
 Catad que peligraréis.
Por eso, no os descuidéis.

Tened olio en la aceitera
 De obras y merecer,
 Para poder proveer
 La lámpara, que no se muera;
 Porque quedaréis de fuera
 Si entonces no lo tenéis;
Por eso, no os descuidéis.

Nadie os le dará prestado;
 Y si lo vais a comprar,
 Podríaseos tardar,
 Y el Esposo haber entrado,
 Y desque una vez cerrado,
 No hay entrar aunque llaméis;
Por eso, no os descuidéis.

Tened continuo cuidado
 De cumplir con alma fuerte,
 Hasta el día de la muerte,
 Lo que habéis hoy profesado;
 Porque habiendo así velado
 Con el Esposo entraréis.

Por eso, no os descuidéis.

Hold always in your hand
 A candle bright;
 Veiled, keep the watch
 With loins girded well.
 Be free of deep sleep,
 Mindful of the danger near.
Do not be careless.

Keep ready your oil jar
 Of merit and deeds,
 Ample to keep
 Your lamp aflame
 Lest outside you be kept
 When He comes.
Do not be careless.

No one will lend you oil
 If you hasten to buy it;
 Late you could be,
 Once the Bridegroom is within,
 The door then is closed;
 Your cries will avail you not.
Do not be careless.

Be constant in care,
 Fulfilling all bravely,
 What you vowed today
 Until death comes.
 In keeping well your watch,
 With the Bridegroom you will
 enter.
Do not be careless.

26.

A La Profesión De
 Isabel De Los Angeles

For the Profession of
 Isabel De Los Angeles

Sea mi gozo en el llanto,
 Sobresalto mi reposo,

In weeping be my joy,
 My rest in fright,

Mi sosiego doloroso,
Y mi bonanza el quebranto.

Entre borrascas mi amor,
Y mi regalo en la herida,
Esté en la muerte mi vida,
Y en desprecios mi favor.

Mis tesoros en pobreza,
Y mi triunfo en pelear,
Mi descanso en trabajar,
Y mi contento en tristeza.

En la oscuridad mi luz,
Mi grandeza en puesto bajo.
De mi camino el atajo
Y mi gloria sea la cruz.

Mi honra sea el abatimiento,
Y mi palma padecer,
En las menguas mi crecer,
Y en menoscabo mi aumento.

En el hambre mi hartura,
Mi esperanza en el temor,
Mis regalos en pavor,
Mis gustos en amargura.

En olvido mi memoria,
Mi alteza en humillación,
En bajeza mi opinión,
En afrenta mi vitoria.

Mi lauro esté en el desprecio,
En las penas mi afición,
Mi dignidad sea el rincón,
Y la soledad mi aprecio.

En Cristo mi confianza
Y de El sólo mi asimiento,
En sus consancios mi aliento,
Y en su imitación mi holganza.

In sorrowing my serenity,
My wealth in losing all.

Amid storms be my love,
In the wound my delight.
My life in death,
In rejection my favor.

In poverty be my riches,
My triumph in struggling,
Rest in laboring,
In sadness my contentment.

In darkness be my light,
My greatness in the lowly place,
My way on the short road,
In the cross my glory.

In humiliation be my honor,
My palm in suffering
Increase in my wanting
In losing my gain.

My fullness be in hunger,
In fearing my hope,
My rejoicing in fear,
In grieving my delight.

In forgetting be my memory,
Humiliation my exalting,
In lowliness my reputé,
Affronts my victory.

My laurels be in contempt,
In afflictions my fondness,
My dignity a lowly nook,
In solitude my esteem.

In Christ be my trust,
My affection in Him alone,
In His weariness my vigor,
My repose in His imitation.

Aquí estriba mi firmeza,
 Aquí mi seguridad,
 La prueba de mi verdad,
 La muestra de mi fineza.

My strength is founded here,
 In Him alone my surety,
 My integrity's proof,
 In His likeness my purity.

27.

A Una Profesa

To a Professed Nun

¡Oh! dichosa tal zagala
 Que hoy se ha dado a un tal
 Zagal
 Que reina y ha de reinar.

*Oh, blessed this shepherdess
 Given today to this Shepherd*

Who rules and will rule.

Venturosa fue su suerte
 Pues mereció tal Esposo.
 Ya yo, Gil, estoy medroso,
 No la osaré más mirar,
 Pues ha tomado marido
 Que reina y ha de reinar.

Good fortune was hers
 Meriting such a Spouse.
 Giles, now I am fearful:
 No more will I gaze on her
 For a husband she has taken
 Who rules and will rule.

Pregúntale qué le ha dado
 Para que lleve a su aldea
 El corazón le ha entregado
 Muy de buena voluntad.
 Mi fe, poco le ha pagado
 Que es muy hermoso el Zagal,
 Que reina y ha de reinar.

Ask her what she gave Him
 To carry to His farm.
 With such delight
 She gave her heart.
 Oh, what a trifle she paid,
 So handsome is the Shepherd
 Who rules and will rule.

Si más tuviera más diera.

Much greater present would she
 give.

¿Por qué le avisas, carillo?
 Tomemos el cobanillo,
 Sirva nos deja sacar,
 Pues ha tomado marido,
 Que reina y ha de reinar.

Dear, why chide her?
 We will accept this dowry small
 She brings us now,
 For a husband she has
 Who rules and will rule.

Pues vemos lo que dio ella,
 ¿Que le ha de dar el Zagal?
 Con su sangre le ha comprado;

Now knowing what she gave,
 What is the shepherd's gift?
 He purchased her with His blood.

¡Oh que precioso caudal,
Y dichosa tal zagala
Que contentó a este Zagal!

Mucho le debía amar,

Pues le dio tan gran tesoro,
¿No ves que se lo da todo
Hasta el vestir y calzar?
Mira que es ya su marido
Que reina y ha de reinar.

Bien será que la tomemos,
Para este nuestro rebaño,
Y que la regocijemos
Para ganar su amistad,
Pues ha tomado marido,
Que reina y ha de reinar.

Oh fortune so precious,
Happy this shepherdess
Who delights this Shepherd!

With what great love He should
give

For his gift was such a treasure.
He gave all, do you not see her
Fully clothed by Him?
See, now He is her Husband
Who rules and will rule.

Good it is that we take her
As a member of our flock.
Let us entertain her,
Her friendship to gain,
For a husband she has taken
Who rules and will rule.

28.

En Una Profesión

¡Oh que bien tan sin segundo!
¡Oh casamiento sagrado!
*Que el Rey de la Majestad,
Haya sido el desposado.*

¡Oh que venturosa suerte,
Os estaba aparejada,
Que os quiere Dios por amada,
Y ha os ganado con su muerte!
En servirle estad muy fuerte,
Pues que lo habéis profesado,
*Que el Rey de la Majestad,
Es ya vuestro desposado.*

Ricas joyas os dará
Este Esposo, Rey del cielo
Daros ha mucho consuelo,

For a Profession

*Oh, what good unequalled!
Oh, marriage most sacred!
That the King of Majesty,
Should be Betrothed.*

Ah, wondrous happening
Ready now for you!
God wants His bride
Having won you by His death!
In serving Him be strong
For you are vowed to this.
*Already the King of Majesty
Is your Betrothed.*

Bright jewels will He give
This heavenly Spouse—King;
He comforts you greatly

Que nadie os lo quitará,
Y sobre todo os dará
Un espíritu humillado.
Es Rey y bien lo podrá,

Pues quiere hoy ser desposado.

Mas os dará este Señor,
Un amor tan santo y puro,
Que podréis, yo os lo asiguro,
Perder al mundo el temor,
Y al demonio muy mejor
Porque hoy queda maniatado;

*Que el Rey de la Majestad,
Ha sido hoy el desposado.*

No one can deprive you of this.
Of all that He blesses you,
A humble spirit is the best,
*For the King all this is given
easily,*

He longs this day to be betrothed.

The Lord will grant you
Love holy and pure.
You will forget
The world's fears,
Ah, much more, the devil, too.
Now the demon is manacled today

*The King of Majesty
Is now betrothed.*

29.

Para Una Profesión

For a Profession

*Todos los que militáis
Debajo desta bandera,
Ya no durmáis, ya no durmáis,
Pues ya no hay paz en la tierra.*

Si como capitán fuerte
Quiso nuestro Dios morir,
Comencémosle a seguir
Pues que le dimos la muerte,
Oh qué venturosa suerte
Se le siguió desta guerra;
*Ya no durmáis, ya no durmáis,
Pues Dios falta de la tierra.*

Con grande contentamiento
Se ofrece a morir en cruz,
Por darnos a todos luz
Con su grande sufrimiento.

*All who serve in the army
Beneath this banner,
Sleep no longer, sleep no more,
For now there is no earthly peace.*

As the captain strong
Our God wished to die,
Let us follow Him now
For we caused His death.
Oh what a happy lot
He won from this strife!
*Sleep no longer, sleep no more,
For God is wanting from the earth.*

With contentment great
On the cross He longs to die
His light to give us all
In His sufferings severe.

¡Oh, glorioso vencimiento!*	Oh victory so glorious!
¡Oh, dichosa aquesta guerra!	Oh fortunate this war!
<i>Ya no durmáis, ya no durmáis,</i>	<i>Sleep no longer, sleep no more,</i>
<i>Pues Dios falta de la tierra.</i>	<i>For God is wanting from the earth.</i>
No haya ningún cobarde,	Not one coward will there be!
Aventuremos la vida,	Let us risk our lives!
Pues no hay quien mejor la	None better guards it
guarde	
Que el que la da por perdida.	Than he who loses it.
Pues Jesús es nuestra guía,	Our guide is Jesus,
Y el premio de aquesta guerra;	The reward of this warring.
<i>Ya no durmáis, ya no durmáis,</i>	<i>Sleep no longer, sleep no more,</i>
<i>Porque no hay paz en la tierra.</i>	<i>For there is no peace on earth.</i>
Ofrezcámonos de veras	Let us truly offer ourselves
A morir por Cristo todas,	All to die for Christ,
Y en las celestiales bodas,	In the wedding in heaven
Estaremos placenteras;	Joyful we will be.
Sigamos estas banderas	Follow these banners
Pues Cristo va en delantera,	Christ leads us on.
<i>No hay que temer, no durmáis,</i>	<i>Fear nothing, do not sleep,</i>
<i>Pues que no hay paz en la tierra.</i>	<i>For there is no peace on earth.</i>

30.

En Una Profesión

For a Profession

*Pues que nuestro Esposo
Nos quiere en prisión,
A la gala gala
De la Religión.*

*Since our Spouse
Wants us in prison,
Let us glory,
Glory in religion.*

Oh qué ricas bodas
Ordenó Jesús;
Quiérenos a todas,
Y danos la luz;
Sigamos la Cruz,

Oh what a splendid wedding
Jesus arranged!
All of us He loves
And gives us His light.
The cross let us follow

*The autograph of the three preceding verses is preserved in the Carmel of Savona, Italy.

Con gran perfección;
A la gala gala
De la Religión.

Este es el estado
De Dios escogido
Con que del pecado
Nos ha defendido;
Hanos prometido
La consolación,
Si nos alegramos
En esta prisión.
A la gala gala
De la Religión.

Darnos ha grandezas
En la eterna gloria
Si por sus riquezas
Dejamos la escoria,
Que hay en este mundo,
Y su perdición,
A la gala gala
De la Religión.

Oh qué cautiverio
De gran libertad,
Venturosa vida
Para eternidad;
No quiero librar
Ya mi corazón.
A la gala gala
De la Religión.

With perfection great.
Let us glory,
Glory in religion.

This is our state
God chose for us,
From sinful ways
He has protected us,
He has promised us
Consolations great
If in this prison
We rejoice.
Let us glory,
Glory in religion.

Greatness He will give us
In glory everlasting
If for his riches
We give up the dross
Found in this world
With all its ruin.
Let us glory,
Glory in religion.

Oh what captivity
Of such great liberty!
Life so fortunate
For time unending.
I desire not to free
My heart now.
Let us glory,
Glory in religion.

31.

Contra Un Ganadillo
Impertinente

Pues nos dais vestido nuevo

*Rey celestial,
Librad de la mala gente
Este sayal.*

La Santa:
Hijas, pues tomáis la cruz,

Tened valor,
Y a Jesús, que es vuestra luz,
Pedid favor.
El os será defensor
En trance tal.

Todas:
*Librad de la mala gente
Este sayal.*

La Santa:
Inquieta este mal ganado
En oración,
El ánimo mal fundado,
En devoción;
Mas en Dios el corazón
Tened igual.

Todas:
*Librad de la mala gente
Este sayal.*

La Santa:
Pues vinisteis a morir
No desmayéis,
Y de gente tan cevil
No temeréis.
Remedio en Dios hallaréis
En tanto mal.

Against an Impertinent
Little Flock

*Now that you give us clothing
new,*

*Heavenly King,
From all nasty creatures
Free this cloth of wool.*

St. Teresa:
Daughters, since you have taken
the cross,

Take courage.
Ask a favor
Of Jesus, your light.
Your defender He will be
In such peril.

All:
*From all nasty creatures
Free this cloth of wool.*

St. Teresa:
These nasty creatures
The prayer disturbs
Of the spirit
In devotion weak;
Yet strongly kept
Is that heart in God.

All:
*From all nasty creatures
Free this cloth of wool.*

St. Teresa:
Since you came here to die,
Do not become confused;
And of such evil creatures
You will have no fear.
In God is found
Your remedy for this evil.

*Todas:**Pues nos dais vestido nuevo**Rey celestial,**Librad de la mala gente**Este sayal.**All:**Now that you give us clothing
new,**Heavenly King,**From all nasty creatures**Free this cloth of wool.*

NOTES

THE FOUNDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

1. See *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, vol. 1 (Washington: ICS Publications, 1976).
2. See *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, vol. 2 (Washington: ICS Publications, 1980).
3. All references incorporated into the text are to the *Foundations* and give the chapter number followed by the paragraph number or numbers; in those cases where more than one chapter is referred to, the new chapter will be introduced by a semicolon placed after the preceding paragraph number.
4. See *Spir. Testimonies* 6, in vol. 1.
5. The letters of St. Teresa have been translated into English by E. Allison Peers, 2 vols. (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1950). The letters will be identified by the date and person to whom written.
6. See *Interior Castle*, Prol., 2, in vol. 2.
7. See also the final section of this introduction, *The Autograph*.
8. See also ch. 18, no. 2.
9. Cf. also ch. 17, no. 3; ch. 28, nos. 15-16.
10. See ch. 5, nos. 6, 10-17; ch. 8, nos. 2-4; ch. 27, no. 5; ch. 29, no. 20.
11. Cf. also ch. 25, no. 14; ch. 28, nos. 2, 5.
12. Ephesians 6:12.
13. Cf. also ch. 27, nos. 11-12.
14. *Constitutions*, no. 27.
15. See *Biblioteca Mística Carmelitana*, ed., Silverio de Santa Teresa, 20 vols (Burgos: El Monte Carmelo, 1915-35), 18:433.
16. See *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum*, vol. 3 (Rome, 1934), p. 166.

17. See Elias Friedman, *The Latin Hermits of Mount Carmel: A Study in Carmelite Origins* (Rome: Teresianum, 1979).
18. 1 Kings 17:2-4. See "The Institution of the First Monks" in *Ancient Carmelite Texts*, translated and edited by Roots Committee (privately printed by Carmelite Communities Associated, 1982), pp. 41-56.
19. See *Rule of Saint Albert*, Eds. H. Clarke and B. Edwards (Aylesford: Carmelite Priory, 1973).
20. See Otger Steggink, *La Reforma del Carmelo Español* (Roma: Institutum Carmelitanum, 1965).
21. *Life*, ch. 7, no. 3. For the early history of the Carmelite Order, see: Gabriel Barry, *Historical Notes on the Carmelite Order* (privately printed by Darlington, England); Joachim Smet, *The Carmelites: A History of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel*, vols. 1 and 2 (Darien, Illinois: Carmelite Spiritual Center, 1975-76).
22. See J. H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain* (New York: Mentor Books, 1966); J. García Oro, "Reformas y Observancias" in *Perfil Histórico De Santa Teresa* (Madrid: Editorial de Espiritualidad, 1981), pp. 33-54; Steggink, *La Reforma del Carmelo Español*.
23. *Life*, ch. 8, no. 2, in vol. 1.
24. *Ibid.*, ch. 32, no. 10; note 5.
25. *Ibid.*, ch. 35, nos. 1-7.
26. See Juan Bosco, "A la recuperación de un nombre perdido: Teresa de Jesús," in *Monte Carmelo* 90 (1982), pp. 266-304.
27. See *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, trans. Regis J. Armstrong and Ignatius C. Brady (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), pp. 209-25.
28. In vol. 2, ch. 2, no. 9.
29. See ch. 10, no. 3; letters to María de San José, April 3, 1580, and to Gracián, Feb. 17, 1581.
30. See letter to Gracián, Dec. 12, 1579.
31. See 1 Cor. 11:3-6.
32. See F. Suarez, *De religione*, tr. 6, tit. 1, col. 2.
33. See *Life*, ch. 32, no. 13.
34. See letter to Doña Luisa de la Cerda, Nov. 7, 1571.
35. On these points, see Efrén J. Montalva, *La Herencia Teresiana* (Madrid: Editorial de Espiritualidad, 1975), pp. 15-70; also my introduction to the *Way of Perfection* in vol. 2.
36. See *Life*, ch. 27, nos. 16-20.
37. See Melquiades Andres, *La Teología Española en El Siglo XVI*, vol. 2 (Madrid: B.A.C., 1977), pp. 172-73.

38. Francisco de Osuna, *The Third Spiritual Alphabet*, trans. Mary E. Giles (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), p. 97.
39. *Spir. Testimonies* 19, in vol. 1.
40. *Life*, ch. 35, nos. 1-2; ch. 36, no. 28.
41. See *On Making The Visitation*, nos. 22, 24, 29.
42. See *Monumenta Historica Carmel Teresiani*, ed., Institutum Historicum Teresianum (Rome: Teresianum, 1973-), 1:17-19.
43. See ch. 3, no. 1; ch. 27, no. 1; ch. 28, no. 37; ch. 31, no. 45.
44. See ch. 14, no. 12; ch. 23, nos. 1-10; P. H. Gracián, "Historia Foundationum" in *Monumenta*, 3:548-53.
45. For a summary of many of these events and further bibliography, see Ildefonso Moriones, *El Carmelo Teresiano* (Vitoria: Ediciones El Carmen, 1978).
46. See *Monumenta*, 3: 549.
47. *Life*, ch. 20, no. 27.
48. *Ibid*, ch. 40, no. 1.
49. See also ch. 22, nos. 5, 10; ch. 26, nos. 7-8.
50. *Life*, ch. 35, no. 2.
51. Jan. 17, 1570.
52. May 9, 1576.
53. For more details about these economic matters, see Teófanos Egido, "Ambiente Historico" in *Introducción A La Lectura De Santa Teresa* (Madrid: Editorial de Espiritualidad, 1978), pp. 88-103.
54. See also *Spir. Testimonies*, 65, no. 4, in vol. 1.
55. See *Monumenta*, vol. 3, p. 574.
56. See also ch. 3, no. 10.
57. Julián de Avila, *Vida de Santa Teresa de Jesús*, obra inedita, anotada y adicionada por Don Vicente de la Fuente (Madrid: Antonio Perez Dubrull, 1881).
58. Letter to Don Antonio Gaytán, July 10, 1575; see *Way of Perfection*, ch. 40, no. 9.
59. For a pictorial account of Teresa's travels, see Tomás Alvarez and Fernando Domingo, *Saint Teresa of Avila: A Spiritual Adventure* (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1981).
60. This is the carefully demonstrated conclusion of Dr. Avelino Senra Varela, a pathologist and professor at the University of Cádiz, in a paper given at the Teresian Institute in Avila, March 22, 1982. See A. Senra Varela, "La Enfermedad de Santa Teresa de Jesús," *Revista de Espiritualidad* 41 (1982), pp. 601-612.
61. Letter to María de San José, June 4, 1578.

62. Letter to Don Lorenzo, Feb. 10, 1577.
63. April 29, 1579.
64. See *Constitutions*, nos. 21 and 23; letter to María de San José, Feb. 1, 1580.
65. See Dr. César Fernández-Ruiz, "Medicina y Médicos en la Vida y Obra de Santa Teresa de Jesús," in *Revista de Espiritualidad*, 23, (1964), pp. 186-209.
66. See *Life*, ch. 33, no.5.
67. See *Monumenta*, 3:584-85.
68. See *Spir. Testimonies*, 58, 59, in vol. 1.
69. *Monumenta*, 1:67-71.
70. See Joachim Smet, *The Carmelites*, 2:52-53.
71. See *Monumenta*, 3:560.
72. See *Spir. Testimonies*, 16, in vol. 1.
73. See I. Moriones, *El Carmelo Teresiano*, p. 101.
74. See *Monumenta*, 3:557-58; 560-61; 578.
75. Letter to Don Roque de Huerta, October, 1578.
76. October 15, 1578.
77. See *Monumenta*, 3:613-15.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 615.
79. See *Monumenta*, 3:617.
80. See Juan Luis Astigarraga, "Ultimos Dias y Muerte de Santa Teresa," *Teresianum Ephemerides Carmeliticae* 33 (1982), pp. 7-69.
81. Sept. 1, 1582.
82. See "Autobiografia A," *Obras Completas de la Beata Ana de San Bartolomé*, ed. Julián Urkiza, vol. 1 (Roma: Teresianum, 1981), p. 306.
83. See Astigarraga, "Ultimos Dias y Muerte de Santa Teresa," pp. 42-43.
84. See *Interior Castle*, III, ch. 1, note 2, in vol. 2, p. 486.
85. See Teófanos Egido, "Libro de las Fundaciones," *Introducción a la Lectura de Santa Teresa*, ed. Alberto Barrientos (Madrid: Editorial de Espiritualidad), pp. 241-68.

PROLOGUE

1. Teresa wrote the history of the first foundation, St. Joseph's in Avila, in her *Life*, chs. 32-36. Fr. García de Toledo was the confessor for whom Teresa wrote the *Life*, especially the account of the foundation of St. Joseph's. See introduction to the *Life*, vol. I, pp. 17-19; also *Life*, ch. 34, no. 6, note 5.
2. Fr. Jerónimo Ripalda (1535-1618) joined the Society of Jesus in 1551. While rector of the Jesuit college in Salamanca in 1573, he

became Teresa's confessor. He was rector also of Villagarcía, Burgos, and Valladolid. He died in Toledo. See *Spir. Test.*, 58, no. 3, note 8.

3. The other seven monasteries were: Medina del Campo (1567); Malagón (1568); Valladolid (1568); Toledo (1569); Pastrana (1569); Salamanca (1570); and Alba de Tormes (1571).
4. The foundation in Duruelo (1568), which transferred to Mancera in 1570.
5. The monastery in Salamanca.
6. The date, in fact, was August 25.

CHAPTER 1

1. The foundation was made August 24, 1562.
2. In regard to the number of nuns in each monastery, Teresa later allowed for an increase to twenty. See *Way of Perfection*, ch. 2, no. 9, note 5; *Life*, ch. 32, no. 13; ch. 36, no. 19.
3. This Sister, María Bautista (de Ocampo) (1543-1603), later became prioress of Valladolid. She was one of Teresa's most frequent correspondents. See ch. 29, note 5; *Life*, ch. 32, no. 10, note 5.
4. This well still exists. The Sister alluded to is again María Bautista. Teresa called the well "the Samaritan woman's well."
5. Alonso Maldonado (c.1510-c.1600) had been a Franciscan missionary in Mexico (1551-1561). He became a defender of the rights of the indigenous people and pleaded their cause in Madrid and Rome before the king and the pope. A man of extreme zeal, he was at the end of his life tried by the Inquisition.
6. One of the hermitages she arranged to have constructed in the garden of St. Joseph's in Avila.

CHAPTER 2

1. No general had ever been to Castile. A general, Fr. John Alerio, had presided at the general chapter held in Barcelona in 1324.
2. See *Life*, ch. 32, nos. 13-15; ch. 33, no. 16. In the final chapter of this book of *Foundations*, she tells how her monastery at Avila returned to the jurisdiction of the Carmelite order.
3. The historian of the monastery of the Incarnation, María Pinel, wrote that the number reached 180 nuns. See *Biblioteca Mística Carmelitana*, 2:140. (Henceforth cited as BMC.)
4. The general, Fr. John Baptist Rossi (1507-1578), whose last name was Latinized in Spain to Rubeo, was elected general in 1564 and visited Avila, February 16-18, 1567.

5. Don Alvaro de Mendoza (d. 1586) was appointed bishop of Avila in 1560 and under his jurisdiction St. Joseph's was placed when Teresa's provincial refused to accept it. Always a staunch supporter of Teresa's work, he was buried, at his request, in the monastery church of St. Joseph in Avila.
6. This is true of Spain. In Italy, the primitive rule was being observed at Monte Oliveto, near Genoa. In regard to the primitive rule, see *Life*, ch. 36, no. 26, note 27.
7. For these patent letters of Rubeo to Teresa, one dated April 27, 1567, and the other May 16, 1567, see *Monumenta Historica Carmeli Teresiani*, ed., Institutum Historicum Teresianum (Rome: Teresianum, 1973-), 1:67-71. (Henceforth cited as MHCT.)
8. See ch. 1, no. 8.
9. The patent letter granting permission for the foundation in Castile of two monasteries of the Teresian Carmel for friars was signed by Rubeo in Barcelona, not Valencia, August 10, 1567. See MHCT, 1:67-71.
10. The provincial at the time, as of April 12, 1567, was Alonso González, and the former provincial was Angel de Salazar.

CHAPTER 3

1. See, for example, *Life*, ch. 23, nos. 3, 9; ch. 33, no. 7.
2. Fr. Baltasar Alvarez (1533-1580) was not provincial at that time, 1573, but was substituting for the provincial, Gil González Dávila, who was in Rome.
3. Don Pedro González, bishop of Salamanca, to which diocese Medina belonged.
4. Julián de Avila (1527-1605) was ordained in 1558 and appointed chaplain of St. Joseph's in 1563, remaining so until the year before his death. His sister, María de San José (Dávila) was among the first four nuns to take the habit at St. Joseph's.
5. This young lady was Isabel Fontecha. She received the habit in Medina in 1567 and took the name Isabel de Jesús.
6. From St. Joseph's she took María Bautista and Ana de los Angeles. From the Incarnation came: Inés de Jesús, Ana de la Encarnación (Tapia), Teresa de la Columna (Quesada), and Isabel de la Cruz (Arias).
7. Antonio de Heredia (1510-1601) made the first foundation of Teresian Carmelites in 1568 with St. John of the Cross. He changed his name to Antonio de Jesús, held important offices in the order, and assisted at the deaths of both Teresa and John of the Cross. See nos. 16-17.

8. Doña María Suárez.
9. The monastery was Our Lady of Grace; the priest friend, Alonso Esteban.
10. These two out of the four from the Incarnation were Isabel Arias, the subprioress, and Teresa de Quesada.
11. Domingo Báñez (1528–1604) was one of the most distinguished theologians of the sixteenth century. See *Life*, ch. 36, no. 15; see also ch. 34, no. 14; ch. 39, no. 3.
12. Teresa thought that a foundation could not exist without the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. She discovered her error later. See ch. 19, no. 3.
13. For clarification on Teresa's understanding of "Lutherans" see the introduction to *The Way of Perfection* in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, vol. 2 (I.C.S. Publications: Washington, D.C. 1980) pp. 19–20.
14. This merchant was Blas de Medina.
15. She was a niece of Cardinal Quiroga, the general inquisitor. In 1581 she entered the Carmel in Medina, taking the name Elena de Jesús. Her daughter, Jerónima de la Encarnación, was already a member of that community.
16. In ch. 2, nos. 5–6.
17. See no. 3.
18. This was St. John of the Cross (1542–1591), then a Carmelite with the name Juan de Santo Matía.

CHAPTER 4

1. In chs. 4–8 Teresa inserts a short treatise concerning the life of prayer in her communities, useful not only for her daughters but for confessors and spiritual directors as well.
2. The story of the foundation of St. Joseph's in Avila (*Life*, chs. 32–36) was written in 1565. Teresa wrote this chapter of the *Foundations* in the later months of 1573 at Salamanca. The reason she had not founded more was that the apostolic visitor Pedro Fernández, O.P., had appointed her prioress at the Incarnation (1571–1573). For the seven monasteries, in addition to Avila, see prol., note 3.
3. See for example *Way of Perfection*, ch. 21, no. 7.
4. See *Way of Perfection*, ch. 21, no. 7; *Life*, ch. 20, no. 16.
5. Teresa wrote carefully in the margin: "I am not dealing here with founders of Religious orders, for since God chose them for a great work, He gave them more grace." This annotation may have been motivated by the same scruple that occasioned a cancellation in

the previous number for which she substituted "and this is true."

In the autograph, paragraph no. 7 is highlighted by vertical lines in the margin. See parallel passage in *Interior Castle*, V, ch. 4, no. 6.

6. In no. 5.

CHAPTER 5

1. For example, see *Life*, ch. 17, nos. 5-7; *Way of Perfection*, ch. 31, no. 8; *Interior Castle*, IV, ch. 1, no. 8.

2. Mt. 25:40.

3. Ph. 2:8: "obedient unto death."

4. For the second reason, see no. 14.

5. Allusion to Ps. 34:9.

6. In no. 1.

7. Lk. 10:16.

8. IK. 18:38.

9. The first reason is stated in no. 4.

10. For the Teresian proverb in this respect, see *Interior Castle*, VII, ch. 4, no. 7, note 8.

11. Allusion to Mt. 26:31-35, 67-75.

12. On this subject, see *Interior Castle*, VII, ch. 4, no. 5, note 6.

CHAPTER 6

1. In this chapter Teresa exposes a kind of psychological anomaly that only appears to be mystical in nature. She creates her own terminology, a number of expressions, in order to speak of it: *embebecimiento* (nos. 1, 2, 6, 7): absorption; *embobamiento* (no. 3): stupefaction; *pasmos* (no. 5): states of daze; *pausada* (no. 5): listless; *amortecimientos* (no. 6): swoons.

2. See *Life*, ch. 20.

3. This kind of self-abandonment (*dejarse*) to these absorptions was practiced by the group within the illuminist movement known as *dejados*. Their spirituality developed along unorthodox lines. See *Collected Works of St. Teresa*, 1:7.

4. In ch. 7.

5. In no. 2.

6. In ch. 5, nos. 2, 10-11.

7. In no. 6.

8. Teresa is purposely vague about their identities, and it is not easy to pinpoint either the place or the names. Fr. Silverio believed she was referring to Alberta Bautista who died a saintly death at the age of 35, and to Inés de la Concepción, the lay Sister, both of the monastery in Medino del Campo. See BMC, 6:51.

9. Inés de Jesús (Tapia).
10. In no. 4.
11. She is speaking of herself; see *Life*, ch. 25, no. 14.
12. Allusion to 1S. 15:22.
13. Allusion to what was said in chs. 4 and 5.
14. Allusion to Mt. 16:19.

CHAPTER 7

1. Under the term "melancholy," Teresa includes a whole series of emotional and mental disorders difficult to reduce to a definite category. The humor called melancholy (black bile) was in the past looked upon as one of the four chief bodily fluids. Mental disorder was supposed to be caused by an excess of this humor.
2. See *Way of Perfection*, ch. 24, nos. 4-5.
3. In nos. 2-3.
4. In no. 3.
5. The danger to one's salvation; see nos. 3-4.
6. In no. 5.
7. In nos. 3-4.
8. Here Teresa is suggesting that these nuns, lest they suffer physical weakness, be dispensed from the perpetual abstinence from meat (see *Constitutions*, no. 11); fish was a customary substitute for meat in her Carmels.
9. In nos. 8-9.

CHAPTER 8

1. This statement is a marginal gloss in Teresa's hand.
2. Teresa is referring to herself. See *Life*, ch. 29, nos. 5-7; *Interior Castle*, VI, ch. 9, nos. 12-13.
3. Teresa noted in the margin: "Fray Maestro Domingo Báñez."
4. In no. 3.
5. Allusion to Mt. 15:27.
6. Teresa is referring to her own experience. As for the man of whom she speaks, some think it was Juan Manteca, a peasant from Avila famous for his extraordinary mystical experiences. After speaking with him, Teresa was left dissatisfied with his spirit. He was later brought to justice for his fraud. See BMC, 19:81.

CHAPTER 9

1. Doña Luisa de la Cerda. See *Life*, ch. 34, note 1.
2. Malagón is a small town, still today, in the province of Ciudad Real. In feudal times it belonged to the duchy of Medinaceli.

3. Her confessor at the time was Domingo Báñez, O.P. See ch. 3, note 11; *Spiritual Testimonies*, 58, note 17. Báñez was opposed to Teresa's desires for absolute poverty (see *Life*, ch. 36, no. 15). His opposition was based on the mind of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), Session 25, *De reformatione regularium*, ch. 3.
4. April 11. Teresa urged Doña Luisa to build her nuns in Malagón a new monastery, the construction of which she supervised carefully. Inaugurated December 8, 1579, this building remains to-day, an exceptional relic still housing Teresa's daughters.

CHAPTER 10

1. Because of the kind of life this young man lived, Teresa does not give his name. He was, in fact, Don Bernardino de Mendoza, brother of the bishop of Avila, Don Alvaro de Mendoza, and of Doña María de Mendoza, who is also spoken of in this chapter.
2. The estate was called Rio de Olmos and was close to the river Pisuerga toward the south of the city. It had been previously occupied by a community of Carmelite friars who moved into the city February 1, 1563. Besides being unhealthy, the place was impractically located in view of the nuns' dependence on alms, for Teresa had founded the monastery in poverty.
3. He died in Ubeda in February of 1568 while Teresa was in Alcalá de Henares.
4. She arrived in Valladolid August 10, 1568, and on August 15 inaugurated the foundation at Rio de Olmos.
5. The monastery of the Carmelite friars. See note 2.
6. They were Isabel de la Cruz, Antonia del Espíritu Santo, and María de la Cruz.
7. See ch. 3, no. 2.
8. St. John of the Cross who in Valladolid underwent a kind of apprenticeship in the new form of Carmelite life under the guidance of Teresa. See ch. 3, nos. 16-17.
9. See no. 2.
10. The priest was Julián de Avila who later wrote of this event: "... and when I gave the Blessed Sacrament to the Mother, I saw her in a great rapture, which she often experienced before or after receiving Communion" (BMC, 18:221). The painter Rubens immortalized this scene.
11. From August 15 until October of the same year when they moved to a temporary location.
12. Don Francisco de los Cobos had been a secretary and confidant of Charles V and a counselor of Philip II. He died in 1547.

13. The bishop of Avila was Don Alvaro de Mendoza. See *Life*, ch. 36, nos. 1-2.
14. February 3, 1569, they moved to the place inside Valladolid known today as the *Rondilla de Santa Teresa*.
15. She speaks of the third, youngest daughter in no. 13.
16. Antonio Manrique de Padilla entered the Jesuits March 8, 1572, and was a novice under the direction of Baltasar Alvarez, the former confessor of Teresa's.
17. This confessor was Fr. Jerónimo de Ripalda, S.J.

CHAPTER 11

1. She was Estefanía de los Apóstoles who received the habit in Valladolid July 2, 1572. The fame of her simple and saintly life spread even to the king, Philip II, and many edifying stories were told about her. A manuscript biography of her was written by María de San José. Despite this mention, Teresa then neglects to tell us about her.
2. Doña Luisa de Padilla, widow of Don Antonio Manrique and mother of Don Martín de Padilla.
3. Ch. 10, no. 15.
4. The prioress of Valladolid was María Bautista.
5. Domingo Báñez. See ch. 3, no. 5, note 11.
6. At the time (July 1573), Teresa was probably in Salamanca.
7. That is, December 8-28, 1573.
8. A monastery of Dominican nuns in Valladolid.
9. Doña Casilda was professed a week after her fifteenth birthday, January 13, 1577. But this story has a further ending, a surprise and disappointing one for Teresa. In a letter to Gracián, September 17, 1581, she speaks of the news, "shocking" to her, that Doña Casilda, then about twenty, had left the Carmelite monastery in Valladolid. It seems both Casilda's mother and the Jesuit confessor, neither of whom got along with the subprioress, had some influence on the decision. Casilda joined the Franciscan nuns of Santa Gadea del Cid, where she became abbess.

CHAPTER 12

1. This chapter heading is not in Teresa's hand. The account of this nun's life and virtues is an example of the kind of necrological literature later imitated by Teresa's friars and nuns alike. The monastery referred to is Valladolid (see ch. 10).

2. Beatriz de la Encarnación (Oñez) (d. 1573) was born in Arroyo, in the province of Valladolid, received the habit of Carmel September 8, 1569, and made profession in 1570.
3. See *Constitutions*, nos. 29, 30, 39, and 43.
4. In nos. 4-9.

CHAPTER 13

1. In chap. 3, nos. 16-17.
2. In fact, she was satisfied only with Fray John of the Cross. See ch. 3, nos. 16-17.
3. To distinguish the two groups in Carmel, Teresa uses the terms "calced" and "discalced," which stem from a difference in footwear. In these *Foundations* and in her *Letters* she refers to them as well by the stuff of their habits: cloth or frieze (rough wool).
4. Don Rafael Mejía Velázquez. See MHCT, 1:74-75.
5. The official name was and still is today Duruelo. But the place looks more like a small farm or pasture land than a town and gives the impression of being even more insignificant than it was formerly.
6. The Sister companion was Antonia del Espíritu Santo, one of the four first nuns who formed the little community of St. Joseph's in Avila. The priest was Julián de Avila, the first chaplain of that monastery in Avila.
7. The foundations were: Duruelo (1568), which was transferred to Mancera (1570), Pastrana (1569), Alcalá (1570), Altomira (1571), La Roda (1572), Granada (1573), La Peñuela (1573), Los Remedios in Seville (1574), Almodóvar del Campo (1575). Since Duruelo had been abandoned, there were only nine.
8. See ch. 2, no. 5. The previous provincial was Angel de Salazar and the present one was Alonso González.
9. See *Litterae Patentes P. Joannis Baptista Rossi* in MHCT, 1:68-71.
10. In ch. 10.
11. This important paragraph shows how St. John of the Cross received special, personal instructions from St. Teresa about the spirit and way of life of the new Carmels she was founding.

CHAPTER 14

1. It was the First Sunday of Advent, November 28, 1568. See MHCT, 1:74-75.
2. In 1569, the First Sunday of Lent fell on February 27. Teresa had written "the first week of" the following Lent, but later crossed out "the first week of." Nonetheless, the visit did occur around the

first week of Lent. She left Valladolid February 22 for Toledo passing through Medina, Duruelo, and Avila.

3. These two were Father Lucas de Celis and Brother José de Cristo, a deacon. Neither of them persevered for long. See Silverio de Santa Teresa, *Historia del Carmen Descalzo en España, Portugal y América*, 15 vols. (Burgos: El Monte Carmelo), 3:206-07. (Henceforth cited HCD)
4. Don Luis de Toledo was both a relative of the duke of Alba and lord of Mancera, the town to which the foundation of Duruelo was transferred, as well as of five other towns. See HCD, 3:234.
5. Its full name is Mancera de Abajo to distinguish it from Mancera de Arriba. The first foundation in Duruelo was transferred to Mancera June 11, 1570 and remained there until 1600 when it was transferred to Avila. See HCD, 3:234-40.
6. After the digression on Mancera, Teresa returns to her account of Duruelo.

CHAPTER 15

1. Martín Ramírez (d.1568), a wealthy merchant from Toledo, provided for the foundation in Toledo.
2. A Galician, from Santiago de Compostela, Pablo Hernández (b.1528) was one of the many Jesuits who helped Teresa in carrying out her mission. Her letters reveal her trust in him, and at this time she responded by giving him power to proceed in her name.
3. The chaplaincy is a fund established for the celebration of daily Mass in a particular church by chosen chaplains.
4. Today this feast is known as the Annunciation. Teresa left Valladolid Feb. 21, 1569, stayed in Avila for about two weeks and arrived in Toledo March 24, 1569.
5. They were Isabel de San Pablo (1547-82) and Isabel de Santo Domingo (1537-1623). The latter was a nun in whom Teresa placed special trust. She was made prioress in Toledo and later sent as prioress to Pastrana where she had to deal tactfully with the difficult situations caused by the Princess of Eboli (see ch. 17, no. 17).
6. The archbishop of Toledo was the noted Bartolomé de Carranza (1503-76), who was then involved in a struggle because of the proceedings instituted against him by the Spanish Inquisition. The diocese was being governed by an administrator.
7. Pedro Manrique de Padilla (d.1577) was the uncle of Casilda de Padilla, whose vocation is described in chs. 10-11.
8. These are still preserved and venerated by the Carmelite nuns in

Toledo. One represents Jesus having fallen with the cross, and the other represents Him seated during His Passion in deep suffering and meditation.

9. Alonso de Avila (d.1586) was one of the many merchants of judeo-converso origin from Toledo. A short biography of him in manuscript form exists in the conventual archives of the Carmelite nuns in Toledo and was written by P. Hernando Dávila.
10. Alonso de Andrada was a young twenty-two year old student.
11. In no. 10.
12. From May 14, 1569 to the end of May, 1570.
13. In nos. 4 and 11.
14. Doña Luisa de la Cerda.
15. In nos. 1-2.

CHAPTER 16

1. Ana de la Madre de Dios (Palma) (1529-1610) was married and became a widow at age 21. She met Teresa in the palace of Doña Luisa de la Cerda and generously offered her wealth for the foundation in Toledo. She made her profession there November 15, 1570, and governed as prioress several times. She died in the Carmel of Cuerva.
2. At first Teresa wrote: "I had to be careful about what I said." She then added between the lines, "the prioress . . . what she said," so as to make the account sound more impersonal.
3. Teresa had first written, "she came to speak to me. I asked her, etc." She obviously wanted to withhold the part she played in these incidents, as is indicated at the end of this number.
4. She is speaking of Petronila de San Andrés (Robles del Aguila) (1545-1576) born in Toledo and professed there in 1571. See BMC, 5:444-446.

CHAPTER 17

1. In 1569, the months of May, June, and July kept Teresa busy with activities and travels, which may be summarized as follows: May 14, the foundation day of the Carmel in Toledo; May 30, leaves for Pastrana and arrives the same day in Madrid; June 8, arrives in Pastrana; June 23, foundation day for the Carmel of nuns in Pastrana; July 13, foundation for the friars in Pastrana; July 21, returns to Toledo.
2. They were six in all, four from the Incarnation and two from the Carmel in Malagón.
3. Ruy Gómez de Silva, a Portuguese by birth, was brought up with

Philip II, who liked and favored him. His wife, Doña Ana de Mendoza, better known by her title, the princess of Eboli, was a capricious, willful woman who later became a source of much trouble for Teresa and her nuns.

4. Her confessor at that time was Father Vicente Barrón. See *Life*, ch. 7, no. 16–17; *Spir. Test.*, 58, note 16.
5. Doña Leonor de Mascareñas (1503–1584), Portuguese by birth, had become Philip II's governess and was later dissuaded by him from entering a monastery. In 1564 she founded in Madrid a monastery of Franciscan nuns called "Descalzas Reales," which was close to her mansion where Teresa occasionally stayed.
6. Mariano Azzaro (Fr. Ambrosio Mariano de San Benito) (1510–1594), was born in Bitonto, Italy, in the province of Bari. Having studied theology and law to such effect that he attended the Council of Trent, he was also skilled in mathematics and engineering. As an engineer in the service of Philip II, he was examining the possibility of making the Guadalquivir navigable from Seville to Cordoba and of using it for irrigation purposes when he experienced the call to become a hermit. Later, as a Carmelite friar, he continued to be esteemed by the king and consulted on various engineering projects. Hasty and impulsive, he was at times difficult to deal with as is evident in Teresa's correspondence.
7. Juan de la Miseria (Giovanni Narduch) (c. 1526–1616), was born in Boggiano, Italy, in the province of Naples. A painter, disciple of Sánchez Coello, he is remembered especially for the portrait he did of Teresa in Seville in 1576. After joining Teresa's friars, he later transferred to the Carmelites of the observance and then to the Franciscans, but finally returned to the Teresian Carmelites and went on the foundation to Genoa. In his old age he suffered from paralysis and blindness. He died in Madrid where his body is preserved incorrupt.
8. In Dn. 13.
9. Mateo de la Fuente (1524–1575), born in Alminuete, near Toledo, later placed his hermits under the rule of St. Basil because of the demands of the Council of Trent.
10. When she speaks of the Council as coming, she is referring to the introduction of the decrees of the Council of Trent into Spain. In the constitution *Lubricum genus*, November 17, 1568, Pius V granted a year within which to comply. See Council of Trent, Sess. 25, ch. 5, *De reformation religiosorum*.
11. See no. 3.

12. At the time she was writing this chapter (1574-1576), the opposition to her had begun.
13. Duruelo, which at the time of this writing had been transferred to Mancera, as is indicated further on in no. 14.
14. Alonso González and Angel de Salazar respectively.
15. In fact, about two months. She left Toledo May 30 and returned July 21.
16. In no. 6.
17. Baltasar de Jesús (Nieto) (1524-1589), a restless and inglorious figure in the history of Carmel, became the first superior of Pastrana. Omitting her customary accolade about the person being a great servant of God, Teresa refers to him as neither young nor old and a very good preacher. Nor did Teresa want the foundation established until Fr. Antonio arrived July 13.
18. During Lent 1574.
19. Ruy Gómez died July 29, 1573. His widow, the princess, thirty-three at the time, distressed over her loss, insisted on becoming a nun in the Carmel at once.
20. In ch. 21.
21. In no. 16.

CHAPTER 18

1. The two foundations were those in Pastrana, one for the nuns and one for the friars. Teresa returned to Toledo July 22, 1569, where she bought the house mentioned in ch. 15, no. 17.
2. The rector was Martín Gutiérrez (1504-1573). On a trip to Rome for the election of a general to succeed St. Francis Borgia, he was taken prisoner by the Huguenots and died in captivity.
3. Teresa's monasteries were now of two kinds: those founded in poverty, dependent on alms, and those founded with the endowment of a fixed income. See ch. 9, nos. 2-4.
4. Probably not remembering the name of the bishop, Teresa left the space blank; she never did remember to fill it in. The bishop's name was Don Pedro González de Mendoza.
5. This lady was probably Doña Beatriz Yáñez de Ovalle, a relative of Teresa's brother-in-law.
6. This chapter was being written sometime between 1574-1576.
7. María del Sacramento (Suárez) (d.1589), originally from the monastery of the Incarnation and later the prioress of Alba de Tormes.
8. See ch. 3, nos. 11-14.
9. October 31, 1570.

10. The chapter is a community meeting at which faults in the observance of the constitutions are corrected. See *Constitutions*, no. 43 in note 24.
11. Teresa is here referring to the legend in the Roman Martyrology (October 21) concerning the eleven thousand virgins martyred near Cologne by the Huns; one of them named Cordula fled at first and hid, but later, moved by the grace of God, offered herself to the persecutors and was beheaded.

CHAPTER 19

1. See ch. 18, no. 3.
2. Nicolás Gutiérrez, a Salamancan businessman, had six daughters in the monastery of the Incarnation, all of whom later entered the Teresian Carmel.
3. In ch. 18, no. 2.
4. In fact, two nuns came from Medina and one from Valladolid; later three others joined them from Avila.
5. See ch. 18, no. 3.
6. They were Poor Clare Franciscan nuns.
7. It was the custom to toll the church bells on the vigil and the day itself of All Souls. See no. 2.
8. She was appointed prioress of the monastery of the Incarnation in Avila by the apostolic visitor, Pedro Fernández, O.P., in July of 1571 and took possession of the office in October. Fernández had been named to the office by Pius V, August 20, 1569.
9. The apostolic visitor, Pedro Fernández.
10. The gentleman's name was Pedro de la Banda.
11. See ch. 3, no. 2; ch. 10, no. 4.
12. September 28, 1573. The sermon was preached by the noted Diego de Estella.
13. Doña María Pimentel was a daughter of the fifth count of Benavente and wife of Don Alonso Zúñiga, the third count of Monterrey.
14. In fact, in 1579, Teresa had to obtain permission from the bishop to move the community to another house, and after her death in 1582, the nuns moved.

CHAPTER 20

1. Domingo Báñez, the noted Dominican theologian, had been Teresa's confessor during the years 1561–1567. For other instances of his opinion in this regard, see ch. 9, no. 3; *Life*, ch. 36, no. 15. In regard to the Council of Trent, see ch. 9, note 3.

2. Teresa de Layz was a daughter of Don Diego Layz and Doña Beatriz de Aponte. "Pure blood" was the term used to exclude Jewish or Moorish background and illustrates a prejudice of the time.
3. He was, in fact, administrator of the University of Salamanca from May 17, 1541 to February 1, 1566.
4. It was the office of administrator for the duke. See no. 1.
5. See Jon. 1-2.
6. January 25.
7. She feared giving this impression if she had a part to play in the account she was giving. See ch. 16, no. 3.
8. Teresa's difficulties in remembering the dates are manifest in the titles of the following three chapters.

CHAPTER 21

1. See chapter 19, no. 6. Pedro Fernández (d. 1580) was a great help to Teresa and her foundations especially during the years 1571-1574.
2. She arrived in Salamanca July 31, 1573.
3. They were received into the order by Teresa. The mother took the name Ana de Jesús and the daughter, María de la Encarnación. They made their profession July 2, 1575. Both of them later exercised the office of prioress.
4. The apostolic commissary and visitator, Fr. Pedro Fernández, invested with pontifical authority.
5. The discalced friar was St. John of the Cross, though it seems the first Mass was said by Julián de Avila. Antonio Gaytán from Alba de Tormes was converted, through Teresa's influence, to a more spiritual life. Assisting the Saint on her foundations of Segovia, Beas, Caravaca, and Seville, he became the recipient of her great confidence, especially in the foundation of Caravaca in which Teresa authorized him to act in her name. His daughter Mariana de Jesús (1570-1615) was admitted by Teresa into the monastery of Alba de Tormes at the exceptional age of seven as an act of gratitude for the services rendered by her father.
6. Isabel de Jesús, sister of Andrés Jimena (see no. 5), best known for the incident at Salamanca (Easter 1571) when, as a novice, she sang a song that sent Teresa into a rapture. She was later a prioress both in Palencia and Salamanca.
7. That is, from March 19 to September 24 when Teresa took possession of the houses for the new monastery.

8. Don Juan de Orozco y Covarrubias de Leiva, prior of the cathedral chapter and later bishop of Guadix and Baza.
9. They moved on September 24, 1574.
10. See no. 1. Teresa left Segovia September 30, 1574. She concluded her three year office of prioress October 6. It might be remembered that shortly after she took possession of the house in Segovia, Teresa sent Fr. Julián de Avila and Gaytán to bring the fourteen nuns in Pastrana to Segovia where they would be free of the disturbances caused by the princess of Eboli. They arrived in Segovia in five wagons April 7, 1574. See chapter 17, no. 17.

CHAPTER 22

1. February 24. Teresa had written 1574. She erred on the date also in nos. 4 and 19. But in the three instances the final 4 was corrected to 5.
2. In ch. 21, no. 1.
3. In ch. 21, no. 1.
4. See ch. 2, nos. 3-4.
5. She is referring to one of the military orders of knights of that time called the Order of Santiago (St. James). In a military order, the knights combined the principles of monasticism and chivalry, pledging themselves to the practice of asceticism and the recitation of the canonical hours as well as to the defense of Christendom against the infidel. Certain territories were governed by the order and were under its jurisdiction rather than the ecclesiastical. See no. 13.
6. Here she begins an account of the conversion and vocation of Catalina Sandoval y Godínez (de Jesús) (1540-1586) which led to the foundation in Beas. Catalina succeeded Ana de Jesús as prioress in 1582. St. John of the Cross was her spiritual director until her death.
7. Allusion to Jn. 9:2.
8. In no. 5.
9. March 19, 1558.
10. In 1560; her mother (see no. 13), in 1565.
11. January 19, 1574.
12. Allusion to what was referred to in no. 14.
13. February 24. Accompanying Teresa on the journey were Fr. Julián de Avila, Antonio Gaytán, and Fr. Gregorio Martínez (1548-1599), who received the habit of the discalced Carmelites in Beas from Fr. Gracián and the name Gregorio Nacianceno. Venerable Ana de Jesús (1545-1621), at whose request St. John of the Cross wrote his commentary on the Spiritual Canticle, was appointed the first prioress.

14. They took the names Catalina de Jesús and María de Jesús. Like her sister, María de Jesús (1549-1604) also had St. John of the Cross as her spiritual director, and three of his letters to her have come down to us. In 1589 she went to Córdoba as Prioress.
15. What follows is a kind of appendix to the chapter.
16. Cf. ch. 17, nos. 7, 14, 15.
17. Bartolomé Bustamente. Before entering the Society, he had been a secretary to Cardinal Pardo de Tavera and was acquainted with the cardinal's nephew, the husband of Doña Luisa de la Cerda.
18. In no. 1.
19. In no. 6.
20. Her provincial at that time was Jerónimo Gracián.

CHAPTER 23

1. Here too she wrote 1574; the date was corrected to read 1575.
2. She deals with the Caravaca foundation in ch. 27. Fr. Jerónimo Gracián (1545-1614), an important figure in Teresian history, was born in Valladolid, studied at the university of Alcalá, and was ordained a priest in 1570. Exceptionally gifted, he entered the novitiate in Pastrana in 1572. After meeting Teresa in 1575, he worked closely with her until her death. Later, falling into disfavor with Doria, he was expelled from the order. He died in Brussels.
3. Gracián's father, Diego Gracián, was a secretary in one of the offices of Philip II.
4. Juan de Jesús (Roca) (c. 1540-1614) was born in Sanahuja in Catalonia. A fellow student with Gracián at Alcalá, he entered the novitiate in Pastrana a few months before his companion.
5. The prioress was Isabel de Santo Domingo (1537-1623), one of Teresa's outstanding daughters, who went with the foundress from St. Joseph's in Avila to Toledo, became prioress there, and after a few months was sent to Pastrana as prioress, where she had to deal with many difficult situations because of the princess of Eboli's meddling in community affairs. The nun about whom Gracián spoke to the prioress was Bárbara del Espíritu Santo.
6. See Gracián's *Historia Foundationum* in MHCT, 3: 539-541.
7. The words, "or almost none like him," were added between the lines and strengthen Teresa's glowing evaluation of Gracián.
8. They had twenty children, thirteen reaching adulthood.
9. The friar to whom she is referring was Angel de San Gabriel. Going to extremes in austerities and ascetical testings, he had to be corrected by Domingo Báñez, O.P., and replaced by St. John of

- the Cross; cf. MHCT, 1:128-131. The absent prior was Baltasar de Jesús (Nieto); cf. ch. 17, no. 15, note 17.
10. She began to write "I was about to regret," but then changed.
 11. Cf. ch. 3, nos. 16-17; ch. 13, no. 1.
 12. Teresa seems to deny that the discalced had constitutions from the Father General, Rubeo, and she seems to do so again in no. 13. Nonetheless, around 1568 he did approve constitutions for the friars which were an adaptation of those written by Teresa for her daughters, but apparently they were not used for long. Cf. B. Zimmerman, *Regesta Rubei* (Rome, 1936), pp. 58-65; BMC, 6:399-406; PP. Tomás-Simeón, *La Reforma Teresiana* (Rome, 1962), pp. 97-100.
 13. The apostolic visitor, Fr. Francisco Vargas, appointed Gracián a delegate apostolic visitor in September of 1573. In 1574, Gracián was appointed vicar provincial of the Carmelites of the Observance in Andalusia, and in 1575 his authority was extended to the Teresian Carmel. Cf. MHCT, 1:184-185.

CHAPTER 24

1. In ch. 23, no. 1.
2. The meeting between Gracián and Teresa took place in April 1575. Not until August 3 did the nuncio Ormaneto extend Gracián's authority to all the discalced Carmelites. See MHCT, 1:221-223.
3. See ch. 27, no. 6.
4. This should read Andalusia and not Castile. In no. 2 she states that Gracián was apostolic commissary in Andalusia. Beas was in the ecclesiastical province of Andalusia; see no. 4.
5. Don Cristóbal de Rojas y Sandobal (1502-1580), son of the marquis of Denia, had been bishop of Oviedo, Badajoz, and Cordoba, as well as an active member of the Council of Trent.
6. In the division of Spain into provinces, Beas came under the civil jurisdiction of Castile; but ecclesiastically it belonged to the diocese of Cartagena in Andalusia.
7. Cf. no. 2.
8. Fr. Gregorio Nacianceno who had already accompanied Teresa on the foundation to Beas. See ch. 22, no. 19, note 13.
9. May 26, 1575.
10. Their names were: María de San José; Isabel de San Francisco; Leonor de San Gabriel; Ana de San Alberto; María del Espíritu Santo; and Isabel de San Jerónimo.

11. She mentioned only one discalced friar in the group; the other men mentioned were Julián de Avila and Antonio Gaytán. See no. 5.
12. See no. 4.
13. See Council of Trent, Session 25, *De Reformatione regularium*, ch. 3.
14. According to María de San José, the archbishop's opposition came from his desire that Teresa and her daughters reform the existing monasteries of nuns in Seville rather than found a new one. See her *Libro de Recreaciones* (Burgos: El Monte Carmelo, 1913), *Recr.* 9.
15. May 29, 1575. The "said Father" was Fr. Mariano.
16. She had two patent letters from Fr. Rubeo, the general of the Carmelites: one of April 27, 1567; another of April 6, 1571. See MHCT, 1:62-65; 110-112.

CHAPTER 25

1. That is, from May 26, 1575, until February of the next year, a period of nine months.
2. Fr. Gracián.
3. Beatriz de la Madre de Dios. See ch. 26, nos. 2-16.
4. See ch. 27, no. 20.
5. Lorenzo de Cepeda (1519-1580) had departed for America in 1540, and now returned to Spain, a widower, accompanied by three of his children (Francisco, Lorenzo, and Teresita) and his brother Don Pedro. A wealthy man, he disembarked in Sanlúcar de Barrameda and began to help Teresa with her foundation in Seville. Soon, he turned to Teresa for direction in his own spiritual life, and a number of her letters of spiritual direction to him have come down to us. See *Spiritual Testimonies*, no. 41.
6. Garcíálvarez (or García Alvarez) continued to help the nuns afterward in the capacity of confessor to the community. From the letters of Teresa to María de San José, one deduces that he was a generous man but lacking in learning and discretion. His interference in community affairs led to his dismissal as confessor of the community.
7. This took place April 5, 1576. The house cost 6,000 ducats, but in a letter to Fr. Mariano, May 9, 1576, Teresa speaks of the great bargain they got and of how the house could not be bought now for 20,000.
8. María de San José (Salazar) (1548-1603). Born in Toledo, she became a servant in the household of Doña Luisa de la Cerda where in 1562 she met Teresa. In 1570 she took the habit in Malagón and in 1575 accompanied Teresa to Beas and then Seville becoming

- prioress there. Through correspondence she kept up a warm friendship with Teresa. In 1584 she founded the Carmel in Lisbon. But later, falling into disfavor with Doria, she was imprisoned there. In 1603 she was sent to Cuerva where she died.
9. An irregularity in the contract which had apparently gone unnoticed, made the purchaser liable for a sales tax called the *alcabala*. Since the community could not pay the tax, the guarantor was held responsible. To avoid arrest, Don Lorenzo went into sanctuary.
 10. Fernando de Pantoja (d. 1582) was prior of the Carthusian monastery of Santa María de las Cuevas in Seville from 1567 to 1580. He was as well a native of Avila. See BMC, 6:250-251.
 11. This took place June 3, 1576. When the procession was over Teresa knelt before the archbishop and received his blessing, but then, to her embarrassment, the archbishop knelt before her and asked for her blessing in the presence of all the people. See BMC. 18:469.

CHAPTER 26

1. June 4, 1576 at 2 a.m.
2. To temper the sadness of the nuns in Seville over Teresa's approaching departure, Fr. Gracián ordered Teresa to pose for a portrait which was painted by Fray Juan de la Misericordia. Still preserved by the nuns in Seville, it is the only definitely authentic portrait we possess of the Saint. When Teresa saw the finished product, she remarked in good humor, "May God forgive you, Fray Juan, for now that you have painted me, you have made me look ugly and bleary-eyed." See J. Gracián, *Peregrinación de Anas-tasio* in BMC, 17:201-202.
3. In ch. 18, nos. 4-5; 24, no. 6.
4. Beatriz de la Madre de Dios (Chaves) (1538-1624), this daughter of Alfonso Gómez Ibero and Juana Gómez de Chaves, made her profession September 29, 1576. In the next year her mother was professed as Juana de la Cruz (see no. 15). Her unfortunate childhood may account for the malice she later showed toward the prioress, María de San José, who as a result was deposed. Beatriz then was appointed prioress by Cardenas, the Carmelite provincial of the observance. In less than a year, new superiors, appointed through the intervention of the king, deprived her of office because of both her imprudent leadership and the debts the monastery had accumulated. María de San José was once again elected. Beatriz eventually repented and lived a long and useful life.

5. In nos. 3-5.
6. In no. 9.
7. This monastery was founded January 6, 1574.
8. Gracián was twenty-nine. But Teresa was mistaken about the age of Beatriz who at the time was not twenty-seven but thirty-six.
9. May 29, 1575, the same day on which the first Mass was said. Cf. ch. 24, no. 18.
10. She made her profession Sept. 29, 1576. See Teresa's letter to María de San José, June 18, 1576.
11. She made her profession Nov. 10, 1577.

CHAPTER 27

1. In ch. 22.
2. After Catalina, she left a blank space with the intention of filling in the surname which was de Otalora. Doña Catalina was the widow of Alonso Muñoz, a wealthy and influential gentleman of Caravaca, who had been a member of the councils of Castile and of the Indies.
3. The Jesuit was Father Leiva. The three young ladies were: Francisca de Saojosa, Francisca de Cuéllar, and Francisca de Tauste.
4. Rodrigo de Moya, widower of Doña Luisa de Avila was the father of Francisca de Cuéllar.
5. In making the foundation in Beas, Teresa brought with her enough nuns for two foundations (see ch. 24, no.4). But since Caravaca was under the jurisdiction of the Order of the Knights of Santiago, the license for the foundation had the condition that the foundation render obedience to the council of the Order of Knights, which was something unacceptable to Teresa (see ch. 23, no. 1; ch. 24, no. 3). For this and other reasons the nuns destined for Caravaca were brought to the Seville foundation.
6. On March 10, 1575.
7. In no. 1.
8. Teresa's letter to Philip II has been lost, but the royal dispatch bearing the date June 9, 1575, is still conserved (see BMC, 6: 257-262), as is also Teresa's grateful reply in a letter dated July 19, 1575.
9. In ch. 24, nos. 3-4. She left on May 18.
10. Ana de Alberto (Salcedo) (d. 1624), a native of Malagón, who was one of the first to be professed there. She accompanied Teresa from Malagón to Beas and Seville and from the latter went to Caravaca. At Caravaca she met St. John of the Cross and became one of his spiritual daughters.

11. Ambrosio de San Pedro (d.c. 1593), a native of Pastrana who was at the time vicar of Almodóvar del Campo, and Miguel de la Columna, not a Father but a lay Brother who was later to cause some trouble by signing a slanderous statement claiming that Gracián was living a depraved life. He later declared that he had not read a word of the statement and had been pressured into signing it by Fray Baltasar de Jesús (Nieto), Jerónimo Tostado, and others.
 12. They arrived in Caravaca December 18, 1575. The Blessed Sacrament was reserved January 1, 1576 (see chapter heading).
 13. This was Francisca de Saojosa, who later, though, was accepted through the intervention of Fr. Gracián and made profession June 1, 1578.
 14. Lorenzo de Cepeda (see ch. 25, no. 3).
 15. Thinking this would be the end of her book, Teresa left some blank spaces as though what was to follow would serve as an epilogue to what she had written.
 16. 1 K. 19:2-5.
 17. Gregorio Martínez y López who took the name Gregorio Nacianceno (see ch. 24, no. 5).
 18. See ch. 21, no. 2; ch. 22, no. 2, and ch. 24, no. 20. She is referring probably to the patent of April 6, 1571 (See MHCT, 1:110-112).
 19. She is referring to the general chapter at Piacenza in Italy, celebrated under the presidency of Father Rubeo in May and June of 1575. The definitory of the chapter imposed on Teresa the command to retire definitively to a monastery in Castile and not go out to make any new foundations. Teresa wanted to submit to this order immediately, but Father Gracián prevented this. As apostolic visitor, he held jurisdiction independent of the superior general. In the acts of the chapter there is no record of this order imposed on the Saint.
 20. Teresa uses this term "accidental joy" in the theological sense of her time, but with a very original application. Accidental joy was that joy experienced by the blessed in heaven that did not flow directly from their vision of God.
 21. Allusion to 2 Sm: 14-15.
 22. She leaves another space of one or two lines and then concludes with the following colophon.
 23. In the prologue, no. 2.
 24. In view of the circumstances, Teresa thought that her work of founding new monasteries had come to an end.
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CHAPTER 28

1. Neither this chapter nor those that follow were numbered by Teresa. At the close of the preceding chapter she inserted the four counsels given her by the Lord for her Carmelite Fathers. Editors usually omit them because they are not a part of this work. See *Spiritual Testimonies*, 64.
2. The foundation in Seville was made in 1575-1576; the present foundation was made in 1580.
3. The word "almost" was inserted by Teresa between the lines.
4. Father Juan Bautista Rubeo; see ch. 2.
5. She is alluding to Frs. Pedro Fernández and Francisco Vargas, O.P., named visitators by Pius V in 1569, and to Fr. Gracián, delegate of the latter (1573) and confirmed in his office by the nuncio Ormaneto (1574).
6. The "holy nuncio" was Nicolás Ormaneto who died in Madrid June 18, 1577. His successor, Felipe Segá (c. 1537-1596) came to Spain (Aug. 30, 1577) badly disposed toward Teresa and her work because of misinformation he had received in Rome prior to his departure. He was in fact a relative of Cardinal Filippo Buoncompagni, Cardinal protector of the Carmelites and nephew of Pope Gregory XIII. Thus, Teresa says the new nuncio was a distant relative of the pope.
7. One of Teresa's ways of referring to the Carmelites of the Observance; cf. ch. 13, no. 1.
8. In a brief dated October 18, 1578, Segá placed the discalced friars and nuns under the authority of the Carmelite provincials of Castile and Andalusia.
9. Allusion to Jon. 1:4-15.
10. The four counselors were: Don Luis Manrique, the king's chaplain and major almoner; Fray Lorenzo de Villavicencio, an Augustinian; and the Dominicans, Hernando del Castillo and Pedro Fernández. On April 1, 1579, they nullified the authority of the provincials over the discalced friars and nuns and appointed in their place as vicar general Teresa's former provincial, Fr. Angel de Salazar.
11. Agustín de Ervías was a learned canon of Cuenco, who exchanged his office for parish priest of Villanueva de la Jara because of his desire for the care of souls.
12. Alonso Velázquez (d. 1587), after spending some years as professor at the University of Alcalá, was made a canon of Toledo, where he became Teresa's confessor and advisor. He was later appointed bishop of Osma, and then, archbishop of Santiago. See *Spir. Test.*, 65.

13. She is alluding to the punishment imposed by Segá; see no. 4. This monastery near La Roda was founded in 1572.
14. Gabriel de la Asunción (1544–1584) was a native of Pastrana and much esteemed by the prince and princess of Eboli. As prior he governed the monastery at la Roda from 1576–1580 and there acted as spiritual director of Catalina de Cardona.
15. She arrived in Malagón Nov. 25, 1579.
16. From Toledo she chose María de los Mártires (for prioress) and Constanza de la Cruz; from Malagón, Elvira de San Angelo (for subprioress) and Ana de San Agustín.
17. In no. 11.
18. Allusion to 1K. 19:9–13.
19. Catalina de Cardona (1519–1577) who arranged for the foundation of this monastery died May 11, 1577.
20. Catalina de Cardona had been governess to Don Juan de Austria, son of Charles V, and to Don Carlos, son of Philip II. In 1563 she withdrew to the solitude of La Roda, and in 1571 began to wear the Carmelite habit, but with the friar's cowl.
21. The hermit's name was Fr. Piña, and he had his hermitage on the mount of La Vera Cruz.
22. "or other things" was added between the lines by Teresa.
23. "a woman" was added in the margin by Teresa.
24. The Carmelite nuns in Toledo; see no. 26.
25. Teresa wrote "Mercenarians." They were, in fact, the Trinitarians at Fuensanta.
26. The part about the tunic was added between the lines by Teresa.
27. This took place May 6, 1571. The habit was given by the prior, Fr. Baltasar de Jesús, in the presence of the prince and princess of Eboli.
28. In ch. 17, nos. 6–15.
29. The tomb (sepulcher) included a carved representation of the dead Christ surrounded by His Mother and others.
30. Gracián crossed out the "Fray" and wrote "Don."
31. In no. 20.
32. Gabriel de la Asunción; see no. 11.
33. February 21.
34. See no. 8.
35. A *beata* was a woman who wore a religious habit and lived a pious Christian life without belonging to any religious order.

CHAPTER 29

1. The monogram IHS precedes the chapter title. The chapter number was omitted. The feast of King David was celebrated December 29.

2. The major superior (vicar general) was Fr. Angel de Salazar. See ch. 28, no. 6.
3. See *Life*, ch. 36 no. 2. Don Alvaro de Mendoza had been appointed bishop of Palencia June 28, 1577.
4. August 8, 1580. The previous March, Teresa became a victim of what was called the "universal influenza," a virus that swept through and leveled Spain that year.
5. The prioress was María Bautista de Ocampo (see ch. 1 note 3). A native of Toledo, she was the daughter of Teresa's cousin. At the age of eighteen, she was taken by Teresa to live at the Incarnation and was the first to suggest the founding of a new monastery (see *Life*, ch. 32, no. 10). She became a discalced nun at St. Joseph's and was one of the two from St. Joseph's to accompany Teresa on the second foundation of Medina. In 1568, she transferred to Valladolid and in 1571 became prioress there. She was one of Teresa's most frequent correspondents. But in her last days she sided with the mother-in-law of Teresa's nephew Don Francisco de Cepeda who was contesting the inheritance left to St. Joseph's in Avila by Teresa's brother Lorenzo. According to Blessed Anne of St. Bartholomew, Teresa in her last visit to Valladolid shortly before her death was treated rudely by the prioress María Bautista on account of this family dispute over the inheritance.
6. It was he who encouraged Teresa to write about her foundations; see prologue, no. 2.
7. See ch. 3, no. 1 and note 3.
8. In no. 1.
9. December 28, 1580.
10. Jerónimo Reinoso (1546-1600), from then on a close friend of Teresa's.
11. The first, Porras, was confessor to the Carmelite nuns in Valladolid. The second, Agustín de Victoria, was a benefactor of the nuns in Valladolid and had a daughter who was a member of the community, María de San Agustín. Also accompanying Teresa from Valladolid to Palencia was Fr. Gracián.
12. This lay Sister was Blessed Anne of St. Bartholomew (1549-1626). Having entered St. Joseph's in Avila, she learned to write in order to serve as secretary to Teresa. After Teresa broke her arm on Christmas Eve, 1577, Blessed Anne accompanied her on her journeys, nursed her in her illnesses and was with her when she died. Eventually Blessed Anne went to France with a group of Sisters to make foundations there. She became a choir Sister and later prioress. She founded convents at Tours (1608) and at Antwerp

- (1612) where she remained till her death. Her autobiography and numerous letters have been published. The other four nuns were: Inés de Jesús (Tapia), a cousin of Teresa's; Catalina del Espíritu Santo; María de San Bernardo; and Juana de San Francisco.
13. Martín Alonso Salinas (d. 1592).
 14. In no. 11.
 15. Suero de Vega was the son of Juan de Vega, who had been viceroy of Navarra and Sicily and president of the royal council. One of his sons became a discalced Carmelite, Juan de la Madre de Dios.
 16. In no. 14.
 17. In nos. 15–16.
 18. He was thirty-five at the time.
 19. The messenger who would be sent by the owner to negotiate the contract (see no. 16).
 20. Allusion to Jn. 9:6–7.
 21. In nos. 14, 15, 23.
 22. The administrator for the bishop was Don Prudencio Armentia; he was also a canon of the Palencia cathedral.
 23. May 26, 1581.
 24. The brief, *Pia consideratione*, given by Gregory XIII June 22, 1580. See MHCT, 2:191–207.
 25. This chapter took place in March of 1581. St. John of the Cross was elected a provincial counselor. For the full documents, see MHCT, 2:236–316.

CHAPTER 30

1. June 14, 1581. In Teresa's time it was generally believed among Carmelites that the prophets Elijah and Elisha often dwelt on Mt. Carmel and that saintly men continued to live there in solitude. These hermits, living in the spirit of the prophets, were later converted by the preaching of the apostles. On one side of the mountain, they then built a church or oratory in honor of our Lady. Thus, according to this tradition, they were the first among all religious orders to be called children of the Blessed Mary of Mount Carmel. Following this version of the order's beginnings which was the accepted one in her time, Teresa as with Elijah refers to Elisha as our Father St. Elisha. Cf. ch. 27, no. 17; ch. 28, no. 20.
2. See ch. 28, no. 10.
3. Beatriz de Beamonte y Navarra (d. 1600) also contributed generously to the foundation of a Carmel in Pamplona in 1583. There she entered as a nun and took the name Beatriz de Cristo.
4. This endowment was a generous one. Twenty-five per thousand

would be the equivalent of 2.5% since sums were expressed in proportions of one thousand rather than one hundred (per cent) so as to avoid decimal percentages.

5. The church was originally named Our Lady of the Villas, but Doña Beatriz had the name changed to Blessed Trinity.
6. Fr. Gracián who was then in the city of Palencia.
7. In no. 2.
8. The seven nuns were: Catalina de Cristo (elected prioress on June 15), Beatriz de Jesús, María de Cristo, Juana Bautista, María de Jesús, María de San José, and Catalina del Espíritu Santo. The lay Sister was María Bautista. Teresa's companion was her nurse and secretary, Blessed Anne of St. Bartholomew. Accompanying this group of nuns were: Fr. Nicolás Doria and Brother Eliseo de la Madre de Dios; Pedro de Ribera (of whom Teresa speaks in nos. 12–13) sent by Don Alvaro de Mendoza; a chaplain by the name of Chacón and a police officer for security, both provided by the bishop of Burgo de Osma; and finally Francisco de Cetina, a chaplain sent by Doña Beatriz.
9. Nicolás de Jesús María (Doria) (1539–1594), born in Genoa, spent his early life as a banker. Arriving in Spain in 1570, he settled in Seville, but then sacrificed his future in finance for the religious life, taking the discalced Carmelite habit in 1577. In 1585, he was elected provincial at the chapter in Lisbon. His interference in the governing of the discalced nuns put him in opposition with Fr. Gracián and St. John of the Cross. He secured the expulsion of Gracián from the order in 1592. In 1593 he attended the general chapter in Cremona in which the separation of the two branches of Carmelites was approved. He died in Alcalá de Henares while holding the office of General.
10. She is alluding to the adage, "For want of good men, my husband was mayor."
11. May 31, 1581.
12. Not only did he give her his blessing, but, as did the archbishop of Seville, he afterward made the Saint give him her blessing.
13. Teresa herself supervised this work.
14. See note 1.
15. August 6.
16. The Jesuit Father was Francisco de la Carrera.
17. In no. 2.
18. In the autograph the word "penitential" is followed by the word "and" and then a long, blank space is left as though Teresa had intended to add something.

19. She left Soria on August 16.
20. See note 8.
21. Blessed Anne of St. Bartholomew.
22. August 23.

CHAPTER 31

1. This chapter (without a number in the original manuscript) was written in Burgos the last days of June (cf. no. 17) at a time in which Teresa's health was very poor. The more than average number of misspellings, repetitions, and obscure or ambiguous constructions point to Teresa's weakened and exhausted condition, although the account itself is a very lively one.
2. An Avilan, his name was Don Cristóbal Vela (d. 1599). His father Blasco Nuñez Vela, was the viceroy of Peru under whose orders two of Teresa's brothers fought against Pizarro. Both the viceroy and Teresa's brother Antonio died in the battle of Iñaquito in 1546. Francisco Nuñez Vela, the viceroy's brother, was Teresa's godfather. Don Cristobal was bishop in the Canary Islands from 1575 to 1580 when he was appointed archbishop of Burgos. There he remained until his death.
3. See ch. 29, nos. 1, 11, 27; ch. 2, note 5; cf. ch. 10, no. 6; 13, no. 6; 17, no. 11.
4. The monastery, today in ruins, was better known as Our Lady del Prado and located outside the city.
5. He received the pallium, which is worn at certain times by archbishops.
6. She is referring to the Council of Trent. See Session 25, *De reformatione regularium*, ch. 3.
7. See ch. 29, no. 1. She is referring to the influenza she contracted in Toledo and from which she suffered a relapse in Valladolid.
8. In ch. 29, no. 6.
9. In ch. 29, no. 6.
10. In the original she mistakenly wrote Soria instead of Burgos.
11. See *Life*, ch. 36, nos. 15–17.
12. Teresa had to return to Avila because of some difficulties in the community with regard to certain minor abuses in the observance of poverty and abstinence and also because of the community's financial problems. The prioress, María de Cristo, renounced her office, and Teresa was elected prioress. In her letter of Nov. 8, 1581, she wrote to María de San José, "they have now made me prioress out of pure hunger."

13. Catalina de Tolosa (1538-1608), the widow of Sebastián Muncharez, had seven children who entered Teresa's Carmel. Two daughters were professed in Valladolid, Catalina de la Asunción and Casilda de San Angelo; two in Palencia, María de San José and Isabel de la Trinidad; and one in Burgos, Elena de Jesús. Her two sons became discalced Carmelite priests, Sebastián de Jesús, provincial of Castile 1603-1606, and Juan Crisóstomo, later a professor at Salamanca college. In her fiftieth year, Catalina herself entered the Carmel in Palencia.
14. In no. 7.
15. In ch. 30, nos. 13-14.
16. Inés de Jesús (d. 1601), a cousin of Teresa's, had been professed at the Incarnation in Avila and became the first prioress at Medina del Campo. In 1580, she went with Teresa to the new foundation in Palencia where she became prioress.
17. The words of our Lord in the autograph are enclosed within variously shaped strokes of the pen and thereby highlighted.
18. Catalina Manrique (see no. 10). These letters were received by Teresa in Avila on November 29.
19. The Minims of St. Francis de Paula.
20. In Alcalá on April 9, 1581, Fr. Gracián had already given the license for the foundation.
21. This wagon was the one in which Teresa was riding.
22. They were: Tomasina Bautista (prioress), Inés de la Cruz, Catalina de Jesús, Catalina de la Asunción (daughter of Doña Catalina de Tolosa), and María Bautista, a white veiled nun. The two who were to return with Teresa were Blessed Anne of St. Bartholomew and Teresa's niece Teresita.
23. She mentioned this in ch. 29, no. 30.
24. Cf. ch. 29, no. 1.
25. The holy crucifix was venerated at the time in the monastery of the Augustinians and is now in the Cathedral of Burgos.
26. In ch. 29, no. 12.
27. Cf. no. 15.
28. In nos. 18-19.
29. Pedro Manso had been a classmate of Gracián's at the University of Alcalá. He served as Teresa's confessor when Gracián left Burgos. He was later appointed bishop of Calahorra (1594) where he brought the discalced Carmelite nuns (1598) and friars (1603).
30. The church of San Gil.
31. To Valladolid; see no. 31.
32. Hernando de Matanza was the city magistrate and the mayor's

brother, Francisco de Cuevas had been a member of the court of Charles V and was married to the Toledan writer Luisa Sigea de Valasco.

33. In nos. 26–27.
34. In no. 26.
35. Pedro Manso (cf. no. 24) and Antonio Aguiar (cf. no. 33).
36. That is, from Feb. 23 to March 18.
37. Doctor Antonio Aguiar, a physician, had been a classmate of Gracián's at the University of Alcalá. Teresa had not yet mentioned him specifically (cf. nos. 23, 25, 33).
38. The owner was Don Manuel Franco. There were two priests given the authorization to sell: Diego Ruiz de Ayala and Martín Pérez de Rozas.
39. That is, one of those authorized to sell.
40. Juan Ortega de la Torre y Frias.
41. The sale was finalized March 16, 1582. The nuns moved in March 18.
42. The price was 1,290 ducats.
43. In nos. 32 and 34.
44. Jerónimo del Pino and his wife Magdalena Solórzano.
45. In no. 24.
46. The church and hospital of San Lucas, a few yards from the houses bought by Teresa.
47. The license is dated April 18, 1582.
48. See Jn. 4: 7–15.
49. Fr. Gracián had returned from Valladolid.
50. Elena de Jesús who because of her young age did not make profession until June 5, 1586 (cf. note 12).
51. Elena de Jesús received the habit from him April 20. Not only did the archbishop preside at the ceremony but he also preached and publicly accused himself for not having given the license earlier and asked pardon for what he had made Teresa and her nuns go through. See BMC, 2:328.

EPILOGUE

1. In *Life*, chs. 32–36.
 2. See *Life*, ch. 33, no. 16.
 3. Actually, it lasted fifteen years, from 1562 to 1577.
 4. He was appointed bishop of Palencia June 28, 1577. Before mid-July, Teresa had left Toledo for Avila. On August 2, Don Alvaro made the transfer of jurisdiction legal. See MHCT, 1:365.
 5. Cf. *Life*, ch. 33, no. 16.
 6. Alonso Velázquez. Cf. ch. 28, no. 10 and note 12.
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THE CONSTITUTIONS

INTRODUCTION

1. See MHCT, 1:11.
2. See *Life*, ch. 36, no. 27, in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, vol. 1.
3. See María de San José, "Ramillete de mirra" in *Humor Y Espiritualidad* (Burgos: El Monte Carmelo, 1966), p. 423.
4. See BMC, 18:158.
5. In vol. 2 of *The Collected Works*, ch. 4, nos. 1 and 4.
6. See BMC, 19:1-2.
7. Cf. *The Foundations*, ch. 1, no. 1.
8. Cf. *Life*, ch. 35, nos. 1-2; ch. 36, no. 28; in vol. 1 of *The Collected Works*.
9. See *Escritos de Santa Teresa*, ed. D. Vicente de la Fuente, 2 vols. (Madrid: M. Rivadeneyra, 1861-2).
10. See *Obras de Santa Teresa de Jesús*, ed. P. Silverio de Santa Teresa, vol. 5 (Burgos: El Monte Carmelo, 1915-1925); *Santa Teresa de Jesús Obras Completas*, ed. Efrén de la Madre de Dios and Otger Steggink (Madrid: BAC, 1967).
11. See letter to Gracián, February 21, 1581, in *The Letters of St. Teresa*, trans. E. Allison Peers (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1950).
12. See *On Making the Visitation*, no. 15.
13. Feb. 21, 1581.
14. Nov. 19, 1576.
15. See *Letters*, Feb. 21, 1581.
16. See *ibid.*, Feb. 27, 1581.
17. See BMC, 6:422.
18. See *Santa Teresa de Jesús, Camino de Perfección, Constituciones, Modo de Visitar Los Conventos*, ed. Tomás de la Cruz Alvarez (Burgos: El Monte Carmelo, 1966), pp. 280-281.
19. Tomás Alvarez (*ibid.*) holds that the ideological and normative content of the work continues to be authentically Teresian. Otilio Rodriguez in a detailed study concludes that the constitutions of Alcalá represent the final wish of the Mother Foundress. See "El Testamento Teresiano" in *El Monte Carmelo* 78(1970), p. 73. Fortunato Antolín in another detailed analysis of the constitutions of Alcalá doubts whether we can speak of a work in collaboration and concludes that it may not be very far from the truth to

think that the impression made on Teresa and her nuns by these new constitutions was a somewhat unfavorable one. See "Observaciones sobre las Constituciones de las Carmelitas Descalzas, promulgadas en Alcalá de Henares 1581" in *Ephemerides Carmeliticae* 24 (1973), p. 373.

20. *Escritos de Santa Teresa*, vol. 1, pp. 251-267.

THE CONSTITUTIONS

1. Winter and summer are considered the equivalents of the times of fasting and non-fasting. Cf. no. 11.
2. The Spanish word *Pascua* would also refer to Christmas and Pentecost.
3. This form of chanting in unison rather than in Gregorian chant was in use also by other religious orders at the time.
4. The practice of reciting Vespers before the noonday meal during Lent lasted until the reform of the Breviary and Missal that went into effect July 25, 1960, and in which it was prescribed that Vespers be said later.
5. Fr. Gracián gave the following explanation: "This means that one hour in all is spent on Vespers and the reading, even when Vespers is chanted. See MHCT, 1:316.
6. See *Rule of St. Albert*, eds. H. Clarke, O. Carm. and Bede Edwards, O.C.D. (Aylesford: Carmelite Priory, 1973), p.91: "For this reason I lay down that you are to keep silence from after Compline until after Prime the next day. At other times, although you need not keep silence so strictly, be careful not to indulge in a great deal of talk."
7. These are but examples of the good books to which she is referring. The Carthusian is Ludolf of Saxony (d. 1370) whose four-volume life of Christ was translated into Spanish by the Franciscan Ambrosio Montesinos (Alcalá 1502-1503). The *Flos Sanctorum* is a collection of lives of the saints. One collection was printed in Zaragoza in 1556, and another, by Martín de Lilio, in Alcalá in 1566. *The Imitation of Christ*, referred to by Teresa as the *Contemptus Mundi*, is attributed to Thomas A' Kempis and existed in Spanish translations from 1491. *The Oratory of Religious* by the Franciscan Antonio Guevara was printed for the first time in Valladolid in 1542. Various works by the Dominican Luis de Granada had been published when Teresa wrote her constitutions. Those she probably has in mind are: *The Book of Prayer and Meditation* (Salamanca 1554); *The Sinners' Guide* (Lisbon 1556); and *The Memorial of The Christian Life* (Lisbon 1565). The

books by St. Peter of Alcantara of whom she speaks in her *Life* (ch. 30, no.2) as the author of some small books on prayer would probably include *The Treatise on Prayer and Meditation* (Lisbon 1556).

8. "Each one of you is to stay in his own cell or nearby, pondering the Lord's law day and night and keeping watch at his prayers unless attending to some other duty." See *Rule of St. Albert*, p. 83.
9. In some monasteries of the order the nuns gathered together in a specified room for their manual work. Teresa preferred that the nuns work in solitude. See *Way of Perfection*, ch. 4, no. 9
10. In 1568, Teresa founded a monastery in Malagón that was endowed with an income. And in 1576, Gracián ordained that in towns where the nuns could not be sustained through alms an income would be permissible. See MHCT, 1:316.
11. Cf. Ac. 20:34.
12. With this constitution, Teresa rendered ineffective for her dis-calced nuns the briefs that authorized for the order a mitigation of the fast and abstinence. The *Rule of St. Albert* (p. 87) reads: "You are to fast every day, except Sundays, from the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross until Easter Day, unless bodily sickness or feebleness, or some other good reason, demand a dispensation from the fast; for necessity overrides every law." In 1432 Pope Eugene IV mitigated the abstinence by allowing meat to be eaten three days a week, except in Advent and Lent.
13. This was a custom in a number of religious orders at the time.
14. Before the Council of Trent, nuns sometimes had the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the choir or inside the enclosure, and they themselves took care of cleaning and decorating. At other times, the Blessed Sacrament was reserved in the church, or chapel, and the Sisters went out into the church to care for it. This is what Teresa is referring to here. In *De Sacris Virginibus*, December 30, 1572, Gregory XIII, forbade the Religious to go outside the enclosure to enter the church. And the Council of Trent had prohibited the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in the choir or inside the enclosure (Session 25, De Reformatione, ch. 10).
15. Here Teresa reacts against the prevailing practice of limiting visits for novices.
16. "None of the brothers must lay claim to anything as his own, but you are to possess everything in common; and each is to receive from the Prior—that is from the brother he appoints for the purpose—whatever befits his age and needs." See *Rule of St. Albert*, p. 85.

17. Cf. *Rule of St. Albert*, pp. 89–90 and 2Th. 3:8–12.
18. In no. 7.
19. See Jn. 15:12,17.
20. A title for nobility.
21. These were the hermits on Mt. Carmel to whom she alludes in other works. See *Way of Perfection*, ch. 4, no. 4; *Interior Castle*, V, ch.1, no. 2; *Foundations*, ch. 14, nos. 4,5.
22. A book of rubrics for the divine service that was in use in the Carmelite Order.
23. In no. 30.
24. Teresa did not compose the next part of her constitutions, included in this note (with the standard numbering), but took it all from the constitutions of the monastery of the Incarnation. Such penal codes were characteristic of monastic constitutions in those times. Since vows were considered solemn and final and many were in Religious life without the desire to be there, greater provision had to be made in the law for both preserving the community peace and dealing with troublemakers—sometimes even with crime:

On The Chapter of Grave Faults

43. *The chapter of grave faults, in which according to the rule the faults of the Sisters must be corrected with charity, should take place once a week. It should always be held while the nuns are fasting. Thus when the signal is given and all have come together in the chapter room, the Sister who has the office of reader, when given a sign by the prioress or presider, should read from these constitutions and the rule. The reader should say: Jube Domne benedicere, and the presider respond: Regularibus disciplinis nos instruere digneris Magister Celestis. They will answer: amen. Then, if it should seem opportune to the Mother prioress to mention some things briefly about the reading or the correction of the Sisters before beginning with the latter, she should say: Benedicite, and the Sisters should respond: Dominus, and prostrate until they are told to rise. When they have risen they should return to their seats. Beginning with the novices and lay Sisters, followed by the older nuns, the Sisters should come to the middle of the choir, two by two, and tell their manifest faults and negligences to the presider. First the lay Sisters and novices may be dismissed, as well as those who do not have a place or voice in the chapter. The Sisters should not speak in chapter except for two*

reasons: to tell simply their own faults and those of their Sisters and to respond to the questions of the presider. And anyone who is accused should be on her guard lest she accuse another solely out of suspicion. If anyone does this, she should receive the very punishment that goes with the crime about which she made the accusation. And the same goes for anyone making an accusation about a fault for which satisfaction has already been made. But so that vices and defects may not be hidden, a Sister may tell the Mother prioress or visitator that which she saw or heard.

44. She should likewise be punished who says something falsely about another. And she should also be obliged to restore, in so far as possible, the good name of the one whose reputation was harmed. And the one who is accused should not respond unless ordered to do so, and then should do so humbly, saying: *Benedicite*. And if she answers impatiently, she should then receive a heavier penalty, according to the discretion of the presider. The punishment should be given after the anger has subsided.

45. Let the Sisters be on their guard against divulging or publicizing the decrees and secrets of any chapter. No Sister should repeat outside in a critical manner any of those things that the Mother may punish or define in chapter, for this gives rise to discord and takes away the peace of the community, and factions are formed, and the office of superiors is usurped.

46. The Mother prioress, or presider, with zealous charity and a love of justice and without feigning ignorance, should correct the faults—and may do so legitimately—which are clearly found to exist, or which are confessed, in conformity with what has been stated here.

47. The Mother may mitigate or shorten the penalty due a fault that was not committed out of malice, at least for the first, second, or third time. But those who are found to be troublesome out of malicious cunning or from a vicious habit should have their fixed penalties augmented, and these should not be omitted or relaxed without permission from the visitator. And those who are in the habit of committing a light fault should be given a penance fit for a more serious fault. The same goes for the others; the fixed penalties should also be augmented if the fault is habitual.

48. Once the faults have been heard or corrected, they should say the psalms *Miserere mei* and *Deus misereatur* as the Ordinary prescribes. And when the chapter is finished the presider should say: *Sit nomen Domini benedictum*. The community should respond: *Ex hoc nunc et usque in saecula*.

*On the Light Fault*49. *It is a light fault:*

If anyone, when the sign is given, should delay in preparing with due haste or promptness to go to the choir in a composed and orderly way and at the proper time.

If anyone should enter after the Office has begun, or read or sing badly, or make a mistake and not at once humble herself before all.

If anyone is not ready to do the reading at the established time.

If anyone through negligence does not have the book from which she must pray.

If anyone should laugh in choir or make others laugh.

If anyone should come late for the divine office or for work.

If anyone should make light of or not duly observe the rubrics on prostrations, bows, and other ceremonies.

If anyone should cause some disturbance or noise in the choir, or in the dormitory, or in the cells.

If anyone should come late for chapter, the refectory, or work.

If anyone should speak or act idly or become engaged in idle occupations.

If anyone without restraint make some noise.

If anyone should be negligent in the use of books, clothes, or other things belonging to the monastery, or should break them, or should lose some of the things that are used in taking care of the house.

If anyone should eat or drink without permission.

Those who are accused or who accuse themselves of these and similar faults, should be given a penance: prayer or prayers according to the quality of the faults, or also some humble work, or some special time of silence (because of having broken the silence observed in the order), or abstinence from some food in some collation or meal.

*On the Medium Fault*50. *It is a medium fault:*

If anyone arrives in choir after the first psalm has been said. And when they arrive late, they should prostrate until the Mother prioress tells them to rise.

If anyone should presume to sing or read in a way different from that which is in use.

If anyone, while not being attentive with lowered eyes to the Divine Office, should show levity of mind.

If anyone should handle the altar vessels irreverently.

If anyone should not come to chapter or work or a sermon, or should fail to be present at the common meal.

If anyone should knowingly fail to observe a common precept.

If anyone should be found negligent in an assigned task.

If anyone should speak in chapter without permission.

If anyone while being accused should make noise.

If anyone should presume to accuse another, on the same day, of the very fault she was accused of and thereby get revenge.

If anyone should be disorderly in gesture or dress.

If anyone should swear or speak in a disorderly way, or what is more serious should do so habitually.

If anyone should quarrel with another or say something by which the Sisters may be offended.

If anyone when asked should deny pardon to the one who offended her.

If anyone should enter the house offices or work rooms without permission.

Anyone accused of the above mentioned or similar faults should be corrected in chapter by a discipline. This should be administered by the prioress or by someone she appoints. The accuser of the fault should not be the one to administer the penance, nor should the younger nuns administer it to the older ones.

On the Grave Fault

51. It is a grave fault:

If anyone quarrels with another in an unbecoming manner.

If anyone should be found using abusive language, cursing, or uttering unruly and irreligious words in having become angry with another.

If anyone should swear or speak in an abusive way about the past fault of a Sister for which she has made satisfaction or about her natural defects or those of her parents.

If anyone should defend her own fault or that of another.

If anyone should be found to have purposely told lies.

If anyone should fail habitually to keep silence.

If someone at work or elsewhere should recount news from the world.

If anyone should break the fasts of the order or especially those instituted by the Church without cause or permission.

If anyone should take something from a Sister or from the community.

If anyone should change the cell or clothing that was given for her use or exchange these with another.

If anyone during the time for sleeping, or at another time, should enter the cell of another without permission, or without evident necessity.

If anyone should be found at the turn, or in the parlor, or wherever persons from outside are, without permission from the Mother prioress.

If a Sister in an angry spirit should threaten the person of another.

If she should raise her hand or anything else so as to hurt her, the punishment for a severe fault should be doubled.

Those who seek pardon for faults of this kind, or who are not accused, should be given two disciplines in chapter, fast twice on bread and water and, in the presence of the community, eat in the last place in the refectory without a table or setting for it. But for those who are accused a discipline should be added as well as a day on bread and water.

On the Graver Fault

52. It is a graver fault:

If anyone should be in the habit of quarreling, being rebellious, or speaking discourteously to the Mother prioress or the presider.

If anyone should with malice do harm to a Sister. (And by the same fact such a one incurs excommunication and must be avoided by all.)

If anyone should be found sowing discord among the Sisters, or habitually gossiping about or slandering them in secret.

If anyone without permission from the Mother prioress, or without a companion who, as a witness, may hear her

clearly, should dare to speak with those outside the community.

If the one accused of faults like these is convicted, she should immediately prostrate herself, piously asking for pardon, and bare her shoulders so as to receive the sentence worthy of her merits, which is a discipline, when the Mother prioress thinks it fitting. And when told to arise, she should go to the cell designated for her by the Mother prioress. And no one should dare approach her, or speak to her, or send her anything, so that she might thus know that she has been mistaken and is being isolated from the community and being deprived of the company of the angels. And during the time in which she is doing penance, she should not receive Communion, nor should she be assigned any office, nor should any obedience be given her, nor should she be ordered to do anything; rather she should be deprived of any office she held. Nor should she have any voice or place in chapter, except with respect to her accusation. She should take the last place until she has made full and complete satisfaction. She should not be seated with others in the refectory but sit in the middle of the refectory clothed in her mantle. And on the bare floor she should eat bread and water, unless out of compassion something be given her by the Mother prioress. The latter should act mercifully toward her and send some Sister to her to console her. If she should show humility of heart, the whole community should support and help her in her good intentions, and the Mother prioress should not be opposed to showing compassion, sooner or later, more or less, as the offense committed requires.

If anyone should openly rise up in rebellion against the Mother prioress or against superiors, or should imagine or do something illicit or unbecoming against them, she should do penance as mentioned above for forty days and be deprived of her voice and place in chapter and of any office she may have held. And if through a conspiracy in this regard, or a malicious agreement, secular persons should become involved to the confusion, disgrace, and harm of the Sisters in the monastery, she should be put in the prison cell, and according to the gravity of the scandal that follows be detained. And if on account of this factions or divisions should arise in the community, both those who cause them and those who foster them equally incur excommunication and should be imprisoned.

53. If anyone, by alleging that the superiors have proceeded out of hatred or favoritism, or similar things, should seek to

hinder the curbing or correcting of excesses, she should be punished with the same punishment as that mentioned above for those who conspire against the Mother prioress.

54. And if any Sister should dare receive or give any letters, or read them, or should send anything outside or keep anything for herself that has been given her, without permission of the Mother prioress, that Sister, through whose deeds someone in the world likewise is scandalized, in addition to the punishment mentioned in the constitutions, should at the time of the canonical hours and the prayers of thanksgiving after meals lie prostrate at the entrance to the church as the Sisters pass by.

On the Gravest Fault

55. A most grave fault is the incorrigibility of that nun who does not fear to commit faults and refuses to undergo the penance.

If anyone is an apostate or goes beyond the boundaries of the monastery and by this incurs the censure of excommunication.

And it is a most grave fault if anyone is disobedient or, through manifest rebellion, does not obey a precept given by a prelate or superior to her in particular or to all in general.

It is a most grave fault if anyone (may God forbid who is the strength of those who hope in Him) should fall into a sin of sensuality and be convicted of it (that is, seriously suspected of it).

If anyone should own property, or confess to this, and be found to have ownership at the time of death, she must not be given a Church burial.

If anyone should lay violent hands on the Mother prioress or on any other Sister, or reveal to others in some way a crime committed by any of the Sisters or by the community, or the secrets of the community, to secular persons, or strangers, whereby the Sister in the community may suffer the loss of her good name.

If anyone by herself or through others should try to obtain some position or office or should act contrary to the constitutions of the religious order, such a Sister should be put in the prison, or fast and abstain in the place where she is, in a greater or less degree according to the quantity and quality of the offense and according to the discretion of the Mother prioress or of the visitor of the Sisters. Any of these Sisters, under pain of rebellion, should be brought immediately to the prison cell as the Mother prioress orders. No Sister should speak to anyone who is imprisoned but only

to the guards, nor may she, under penalty of the same punishment, send such a one anything. If anyone should get out of the prison, the Sister who was in charge of her, or the one who is responsible for her getting out, if convicted, should be put in the same prison cell and punished in accordance with the offenses of the nun who was imprisoned.

56. There should be a prison cell set aside where nuns such as these may be held, and no one who is there for these scandalous reasons may be set free except by the visitor. The apostate nun should be kept indefinitely in the prison as well as she who falls into the sin of the flesh and she who commits a crime that in the world would merit the death penalty; also those who do not want to be humble or recognize their fault, unless their patience and amendment is proved during this time to such an extent that with the counsel of all those who intercede for them they may merit, with the consent of the Mother prioress and through the visitor, to be freed from the prison. And anyone who has been in prison will know that she has lost active and passive voice and the place that goes with it. And she will be deprived of every legitimate act and every office, for although she is freed from the prison, the above mentioned are not for that reason restored, unless this favor is explicitly granted her. And even if her place is restored to her, not by that fact is her voice in chapter restored. And if active voice is given, this does not mean that she is given passive voice, unless, as was said, this is expressly given her. Nonetheless, the one who has fallen into those faults that were mentioned may not be exonerated to the point that she may be elected to any office, nor may she accompany the Sisters at the turn, or anywhere else.

If a Sister has fallen into the sin of sensuality, even though she is repentant and comes back asking for mercy and pardon, she should in no way be taken back, unless there is some intervening reasonable cause to do so, with the counsel of the visitor as to how she is to be received back.

If anyone is convicted in the presence of the prioress of having borne false witness, or should be in the habit of slander, she should do her penance in this way: at meal time, without a mantle, wearing a scapular, on which will be sewn, on the front and back, two pieces of red and white cloth in the shape of tongues, she should eat bread and water on the floor in the middle of the refectory as a sign that she is being punished in this way for the great vice of her tongue; and afterward she should be imprisoned. And if at some time she is freed from the prison, she should have no voice or place.

And if the prioress, which God forbid, should fall into some of these faults, she should be deposed at once so that she may be severely punished.

25. In the disciplines (scourgings) that the Sisters administered to themselves, knotted cords were used. This form of corporal penance was common in those times. Cf. *Way of Perfection*, ch. 3, no. 10; ch. 4, no. 2.

ON MAKING THE VISITATION

1. Cf. no. 2.
2. Not in her Carmels. To avoid misinterpretation, Gracián emended the text to read: "that are *not* the practice now . . ."
3. In no. 2.
4. In those having an income (no. 10) and in those founded in poverty (no. 8).
5. She is perhaps referring to the *Acts* of the apostolic visitor Pedro Fernández, O.P., given for Carmelites of both groups in 1571.
6. She had received orders from the general chapter of Piacenza (1575) not to go out to make new foundations (cf. *Foundations*, ch. 27, no. 20; Letter to María Bautista, Dec. 30, 1575).
7. In no. 16.
8. "This is very important" was added in the margin by Teresa. Cf. her letter to Gracián, Nov. 19, 1576.
9. In nos. 3-4.
10. In no. 32.
11. See *Constitutions*, no. 10.
12. In nos. 10-11.
13. In no. 32.
14. In nos. 3-4.
15. Reference to Fr. Gracián who was then provincial. See also nos. 46, 49, 54, 55.
16. In no. 15.
17. In no. 52.
18. Teresa here concludes her series of counsels or suggestions. A kind of epilogue in the form of a note to Fr. Gracián follows.
19. During the months of October and November, under orders from Fr. Gracián, she wrote chapters 21-27 of her *Foundations*.
20. She is referring to the visitations made among the Carmelites of the observance.
21. She is probably referring to those for which she asked in no. 54.

A SATIRICAL CRITIQUE

1. Ps. 85:9.
2. Allusion to Jn. 20:11-18; 4:7-42; Mt. 15:21-28; Mk. 7:24-30.
3. After his return from the Indies, her brother Lorenzo lived in Avila and remained in close contact with the community of St. Joseph's.
4. In nos. 5 and 6.

RESPONSE TO A CHALLENGE

1. In the manuscript a note is added at this place: "Here ends page 2 of the original, and the text passes on to page 8. Thus it may be surmised that a large number of nuns, after the example of their superior, Teresa of Jesus, took part in this spiritual challenge."
2. She in fact died in May of 1574 according to a letter of Teresa's to María Bautista, May 14, 1574.
3. This knight-errant is believed to be St. John of the Cross who had been confessor to the community at the Incarnation since May of 1572.

POETRY

1. See A. Custodio Vega, *La Poesía de Santa Teresa* (Madrid: BAC, 1975); Victor G. de la Concha, *El arte literario de Santa Teresa* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1978).
2. See Tomás de la Cruz (Alvarez), "Nuevos autógraphos teresianos," in *Ephemerides Carmeliticae*, 21 (1970), pp. 409-27; *Id.*, "Nuevos autografos poeticos de Santa Teresa," in *Ephemerides Carmeliticae*, 24 (1973), pp. 414-27.
3. *Teresa de Jesús, Obras Completas*, texto revisado y anotado por Tomás de la Cruz, 2a edicion (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 1977).

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